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SCS #1392

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MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

Rev. ALEXANDER STEWART, D. D.

ONE OF THE

MINISTERS OF CANONGATE, EDINBURGH.

[by James Sime, D.D.]

TO WHICH ARE SUBJOINED,

A FEW OF HIS SERMONS.

Second Edition.

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PREFACE.

THE Church of Scotland, though not unadorned with a succession of faithful men, who have successfully cultivated the field of her ecclesiastical jurisdiction, has not been careful to transmit to posterity, published memorials of the lives and useful labours of her eminent ministers. Nor would it be difficult to account for the omission, without detracting from the merits of the dead, and without impeaching the gratitude of the living.

However, in an age addicted to publicity above all that have gone before it,—an age in which lives of children are compiled with care, and read with avidity, and in which *fiction* is often called in, to lend a more graceful drapery for the ornament of simple truth, it seems not only allowable, but necessary, occasionally to introduce to public notice, the venerable character of experienced excellence, and matured grace; and if that character have the relative sanctity of office attached to it, it is not the less worthy of observation. They deserve well of the Church, who provide authentic narratives of early religion, for the edification of her youth; while it should not be forgotten, that there are other classes of the Christian community, and especially those who aspire at being teachers in the church, to whom a delineation of genuine religion, in

its higher acquirements, may prove essentially beneficial. We are aware, that many admirable works of this description are already in circulation; though, we apprehend, the catalogue is not so full, but that there is room for an occasional addition to the list.

Indeed, he who proposes to introduce such a character as that of the subject of this Memoir, to the better acquaintance of the friends of religion, needs no prefatory apology, at least for the design. Few knew him, while living, without desiring to know more of him than his singular modesty easily permitted to appear. And after his decease, a very general desire was manifested, to be put in possession of such fruits of his study and experience, as it was supposed such a man must needs have left behind him. On examining his papers, however, it was found, that the number of his Sermons which were fully written out, was too limited to admit of publication. But as a number of valuable Letters was accessible, which, it was thought, would be regarded as an acceptable contribution to the treasury of religious reading, these, together with the Sermons, it was resolved to give to the Public; it being always kept in view, that in whatever shape these remains might be edited, some account of Dr Stewart's Life should accompany them.

At first it was intended to prefix a Memoir distinct from the Letters; but, on reflection, it appeared that the materials for such a Memoir were scanty without the Letters, and that the Letters would be obscure without the Memoir,—and hence the plan of connecting the Letters with biographical notices was adopted as most eligible. That it determines the selection of

Letters to such as bear most directly on the facts and events of the personal history, irrespective of their intrinsic worth,—and that it breaks the continuity of narrative, which is necessary to sustain the Reader's interest in the principal subject,—presenting a variety of valuable parts at the expense of unity,—are disadvantages incident to the method which has been followed. But a great compensating advantage arises from the introduction of so great a quantity of Dr Stewart's own reflections and views,—to exhibit which in a useful light, was the chief end of the compilation.

In the first part of the Memoir, the Reader will probably think that there is an unnecessary dilation of the subject, and that several reflections of the Compiler might have been spared. His object was to contrast the unrenewed state of a man eminently amiable and accomplished, with the new character formed by divine grace,—and on this, he conceived, much of the usefulness of the work depended.

In the statements respecting Moulin,—the most important scene of Dr Stewart's ministry,—it may be thought the Narrative should have terminated with his separation from the people of that charge. But, we apprehend, few Readers would have been satisfied without some after-reference; and a better principle than that of curiosity would prompt the inquiry, How fared it with them after his removal? The Compiler, however, would have it understood, that what is said on that subject, applies only to the time specified, and has no more necessary application to the present state of that parish, than a description of Dr Stewart's early la-

bours in that place, would have had to the character of his subsequent ministry.—This remark ought to prevent injurious conclusions respecting the continuance of a state of things that has happily long since passed away.

The Letters are published without alteration, and without correction; and though nothing was doubtless farther from the thoughts of the writer than their publication, they will not, it is presumed, injure his memory, viewed merely as literary compositions, and presenting a specimen of the simply elegant in style, —while they exhibit, in a most interesting light, the warmth of his friendships, and the ardour of his piety.

The Reader need not expect, in the following pages, to find the life of Dr Stewart connected with the progress of literature in the period in which he lived.—Neither need he anticipate the discussion of debateable opinions, and collateral topics; for though a reference to some points of great moment and interest was unavoidable in the progress of the narration, discussion has been generally shunned, even at the risk of appearing superficial.

Nothing was intended, but simply to represent the principles of the Christian, in connection with the useful exertions of the minister of Christ. When the work was devolved on the Compiler, he was fully aware that the official occupation of his time would allow little leisure for doing justice to the subject.—However, a sense of duty forbade him to decline it; and he now commits it to the guidance of His Spirit, who can render the feeblest instruments powerful to accomplish the edification of his Church.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

REV. ALEXANDER STEWART, D. D.

ALEXANDER STEWART, D. D. was born at the Manse of Blair in Athole, on the 29th of January 1764. Of this parish, his great grandfather, a younger son of the Laird of Invernahiel, in Argyleshire, had been minister some time during the temporary establishment of Episcopacy in Scotland; but on the Episcopal form giving place to a more approved order of ecclesiastical polity, Mr Stewart, not choosing to conform, was either ejected, or voluntarily resigned his ministerial charge. Little more is known of him, than that, having married the grand-daughter and heiress of the Bishop of Argyle, he purchased several estates in the counties of Argyle and Perth. Strathgarry, one of these estates,

about three miles from Blair, and of no great extent, descended to a younger son, who followed no profession, and left the paternal inheritance to his eldest surviving son, who was also minister of Blair. He married a Miss Isabella Robertson, a lady of gentle and rather reserved manners, but of fervent piety; and of their five children, Alexander, the subject of this memoir, was the youngest *.

His mother was well advanced in life, at the period of his birth; and having had no child for nine years preceding, she no doubt regarded him with peculiar fondness. But whatever indulgence he met with in early life, it certainly produced no injurious effects on his natural temper, which was singularly good. His excellent mother survived the birth of Alexander about three years. His father, who was much respect-

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* The rest of the family were as follow:

DUNCAN, who became minister of Balquhidder, and died 1804.

CECILIA, married to Gilbert Stewart, Esq. of Foncastle, also deceased.

JANE, married to the Rev. A. Small, successively minister of Kirkmichael, Newtyle, and Kilconquhar. Mrs Small still survives.

MARGARET, who died in 1819, unmarried, having lived mostly with her brother at Moulin, previous to his translation to Dingwall.

ed for his piety and worth, was particularly distinguished for eloquence in Gaelic, a language in which the principal part of public worship in that neighbourhood is still conducted, and in which his son afterwards attained uncommon skill. He was a popular preacher, and appears to have held evangelical principles. He died in 1780. For some months previous to his decease, he is said to have felt a presentiment that the time of putting off his earthly tabernacle was at hand, in the expectation of which he put his house in order, and expressed an earnest desire to administer the Lord's supper to his people, as for the last time. He lived till the stated season of that solemnity, preached from Psal. xliii. 3. "O send forth thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God,—unto God my exceeding joy!" In his exhortation at the communion service, he was observed to be singularly warm and pathetic, repeating, with much feeling, these words: "Some of us shall drink no more of the "fruit of the vine, until we drink it new in our "Father's kingdom." The remaining part of the week was passed in his usual health and pursuits; but on the Saturday evening, after due preparation had been made for the expected public services of the following day, he began

to feel himself unwell, and having slept two hours, awoke only to breathe for a few moments, and then quietly sunk into everlasting rest.

Descended of such parents, Alexander entered life in circumstances highly advantageous; and perhaps, were an enlightened mind calmly to survey the various conditions in which human beings may be placed, on their first entrance into life; and were then to select the most favourable for improving the intellectual powers, and for acquiring habits of virtue and religion, the house of such a minister would be preferred, where literary taste is encouraged in its developement, and directed in its tendencies; where there is not only a vigilant guardianship exercised, to prevent the deterioration of native character, but likewise the constant exhibition of a higher standard, in the objects on which the affections habitually repose, and which are the most likely to engage the imitative faculty, while the best methods are at the same time sedulously employed, to lead the soul to the true knowledge of its origin, its interests, and its end. And though it be seen, in the instance of Alexander Stewart, that no training of man, however skilful, avails to make the plant of corruption grow up into a right tree, whose fruit is good; yet he, doubtless, had much reason for thankfulness to the Providence that placed him

under the care of parents so well qualified to be guardians of his unthinking days.

The lines had indeed fallen to him in pleasant places. The scene of his nativity possesses localities of beauty and grandeur seldom surpassed. The pass of Killicranky, which a distinguished modern traveller compares to the far-famed Vale of Tempe, lies in the vicinity of Blair Manse; and besides that enchanting ground, several objects not less striking to a youthful mind surrounded his home, and would have some influence in expanding his imagination, and fostering a taste for the sublime and beautiful in nature and in art.

Of his early studies there is no account; only it is known that he was never entered at a public school. His father, it seems, was one of those,

> "————————Who, busy as they are,
> Yet make their progeny their dearest care,
> A father blessed with an ingenuous son,
> Father, and friend, and tutor all in one."

And perhaps the beautiful simplicity of character, by which his son was distinguished through life, was not a little owing to the domestic culture he enjoyed, and the unreserved freedom of social intercourse with persons who were too wise to practise artifice, or to initiate

him into habits of insincerity, in order to fit him for the world. And in this respect, private education has one singular advantage over public,—for if a greater emulation to excel be excited by the comparison and the competition of a numerous school, and if a superior address and knowledge of character be there more promptly acquired, it is often at the expense of qualities ornamental in youth, and elementary of future worth.

Several years previous to his father's death, he had been placed with his brother-in-law, Mr Small, at that time the minister of a neighbouring parish, and a scholar of no secondary rate. Under such skilful direction, he appears to have advanced rapidly in classical learning. That he made early proficiency is certain, for, at the age of thirteen, he was fully qualified to commence student at St Andrews, a university once the most celebrated seat of learning in Scotland. There his industry must have been unremitted, and successfully applied, for he obtained the highest honours his College could bestow; and though among his contemporaries were several scholars of note, in the competition for prizes he was generally successful, and sometimes carried away the first.

What his motives for the exertions he then made to acquire eminence in literature

were, we cannot now ascertain; probably they terminated in something he himself would, in more enlightened days, disallow and condemn. But, in the mean time, that God, who knows all his works from the beginning, and who designed him for a path in which sanctified literature was essential to his usefulness, thus gave his mind a determination to aspire after the highest intellectual attainments, and favoured his exertions to excel.

There were three departments of study in which he appears to have prosecuted his researches with great diligence and success,—grammar, mathematics, and metaphysics, for which he had a mind peculiarly adapted. He possessed a certain intuitive clearness of perception, which readily seized and wielded abstract ideas, and delighted in tracing their analogies and relations. His mind had an intellectual vigour, capable of pursuing its inquiries long and far, without the consciousness of fatigue; and though classical literature was not neglected by him, the abstract sciences seem to have been regarded with partiality, and prosecuted with uncommon ardour.

At the age of eighteen, he entered on the study of divinity, with a view to qualify himself for the ministry; about which time he went to reside in the family of Mr Graham of

Greigston, as private tutor to his sons. There is reason to believe his residence in this family was highly agreeable to himself; and as their country-house was only five miles from St Andrews, in which the family were accustomed to spend their winters, he had every facility for prosecuting his own studies, while directing those of his pupils.

Mrs Graham was a woman of good understanding and cultivated taste, having paid more attention to classical learning and ethical studies, than ladies usually think necessary, and was therefore capable of appreciating the qualities of Mr Stewart. In this family he lived four years, and the kindly intercourse that was maintained for many years after, was a proof of the esteem in which he was held, and the fidelity with which he had discharged his trust.

That he was useful to the souls of any in that family, it cannot be said; for hitherto, though generally beloved for his amiableness, and honoured for his genius and accomplishments, he knew not the things of his own peace, and could not guide others by a way he had not known.

From the opportunities he possessed from his earliest years to hear religious truths, and see them exemplified, it might be thought he could hardly grow up ignorant of religion. If religion

mean nothing more than an acquaintance with the principles of revelation, and the formal observances of external duties, he was religious betimes. But if religion be the result of a divine influence acting on the mind, to turn it to God, communicating light, and working with power, to produce an abiding spirituality of character in the knowledge of Christ; to this he was then, and long after, greatly a stranger. From his letters, however, it appears, that during the period of his attendance at the Divinity Hall, some serious impressions of a religious character were made on his mind.

But whatever means were employed to cherish those new impressions, they seem to have quickly died away; and he appears to have left the Divinity Hall with little knowledge of spiritual things, or at least with little experience of their abiding power *.

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* It might be supposed a student of divinity must have many advantages for having religious impressions strengthened in their commencement, as well as for acquiring just and extensive views of theological truth, while he is attending the prelections, and has access to the counsels, of one professedly appointed to instruct him in the knowledge of divine things. To undervalue these advantages, would be highly injurious; and, in those who have profited by them, it would be making an unworthy return. Yet we

But whatever else he brought from College, he certainly carried away a mind rich in literary

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must here presume to remark, that the almost total silence which is sometimes maintained in divinity lectures, on what is denominated *experience* in religion, is not likely to operate beneficially on the minds of theological students.

To be put in possession of the completest body of evidence on the claims of revelation,—to be trained to defend it, and qualified to carry the warfare into the enemies' country,—to acquire a correct knowledge of theology, so as to be able to form its separate parts into systematic combination, and to perceive how each part adds to the beauty, and the consistency, and the strength of the whole, is indispensably necessary to him who aspires to become a teacher in the church.

But if no means are used to promote or ascertain personal piety in the student; if the nature and necessity of experimental religion are handled superficially, or entirely overlooked; a defect exists for which no adequate compensation is made by theoretic knowledge, or by the speculative orthodoxy of a systematic creed. We are aware of the different duties which belong to the *pulpit* and the *chair;* and that, to enter into the details and the casuistry of Christian experience, though befitting the preacher, would not suit the nature of the professor's dignified place. Nevertheless, to exclude from divinity-lectures all instruction on the subject of *internal religion,* proves injurious on this ground: the theological student naturally concludes, that he needs nothing more to qualify him for the sacred office at which he aspires, than what his instructor brings prominently into view; and, if experimental religion is altogether

acquirements of the first order; and when he came to be proposed as a candidate for license, he was able to produce the most flattering testimonials from the Professors under whom he had passed through his academical course.

About this time, 1785, the parish of Moulin, adjoining to his father's scene of ministerial la-

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kept back, he goes forth ignorant of its necessity,—perhaps a railer at those who pretend to it.

That a deficiency somewhere exists in the method of instruction, might be inferred from the apparent want of zeal for the grand object of their profession, which predominates among theological students. A lecturer on chemistry or mineralogy sometimes throws such an intense interest over the subjects of his department, that he kindles a glow of enthusiasm in the breasts of most who hear him; and the student goes forth to analyze a fluid, or to mark the fracture of a rock, with greater ardour than the young theologian manifests in his incomparably more sublime pursuits. This want of ardour is doubtless partly owing to the cold, and abstract, and controversial method of prelecting, which obtains in some of our Divinity Halls, and which applies few generous incentives to awaken a magnanimous devotedness to the Christian cause, irrespective of geographical marks, or local establishments. With the purest theological institutions in any country, and with an excess of preachers at home, the church of Scotland has sent forth fewer Evangelical labourers, either to heathen nations or to colonies, than the church of Rome, or almost any other Christian communion.

bour, becoming vacant, his friends employed their influence to procure from the Duke of Athole a presentation to the charge. On this occasion, his College furnished him with honourable recommendations; and many individuals being zealous to promote his nomination, (among whom the late Principal Hill deserves to be particularized for his activity), after some delay, his appointment to Moulin took place.

Of his state of mind at the time, a judgment may be formed from the following letter, describing his first visit to Moulin, to preach before the people, previous to the moderation of a call. "I have had a most agreeable excursion "to the Highlands. The object of my journey, "the friendly reception I met with wherever I "came, good spirits, choice weather, and agree-"able company, all conspired to heighten the "enjoyment. I thought I had never seen A-"thole to such advantage before. Every wood, "every hill and stream, looked jocund. I felt "my heart warmed when I approached the vil-"lage of Moulin, with an affection somewhat "similar, I suppose, to what one feels for his "new-born offspring. I preached on the 28th "ult. in English and Gaelic. The church was "very full. I am told I gave satisfaction. My "call, as far as can be judged, was unanimous. "The people shewed great earnestness in my fa-

" vour. This, you can believe, was highly pleas-
" ing to me, and I indulged the pleasure without
" scruple, because I thought myself in no hazard
" of gratifying my vanity by that indulgence;
" for I have been little in that country since I
" was a child, and therefore am little known or
" liked on my own account. The people's at-
" tachment to me proceeds from a cause vastly
" more grateful than the highest compliments
" they could pay to my own merits, that is, the
" respect they retain for my father's memory.
" I was happy in thinking that I could attri-
" bute their attachment wholly to that cause.

" The living of Moulin is, upon the whole,
" good; the society good; the manse not so good
" as I could wish, but I have seen many worse.
" I was not, when I saw it, nor am I yet, in a
" humour to find fault. The situation, the pro-
" spect, is in summer the most delectable. A
" piece of the most delightful birch wood, in
" the neighbourhood, afforded me one of the
" most delightful strolls I ever enjoyed. It
" seems made to invite the early contemplator
" to pursue

" The wildly devious morning walk."

" The country in general abounds in birch, a
" harmless kind of wood that excites neither the
" dread nor the detestation of the beholder, as

" in a neighbouring country; but, on the con-
" trary, possesses every beauty, except perhaps
" the beauty of utility; but even that is not
" wanting, for it is much used on the roofs of
" cottages.

" One day I rode out of my way on purpose
" to see the pass of Killicranky, a deep, narrow
" gully, of about a mile long. The Garry runs
" below, black and deep, but not rapid, unless
" when swollen with rain. The banks are very
" steep, heathy, and covered with wood, and
" rise to a very considerable height. The pub-
" lic road is cut out of the face of the bank, but
" broad and well-finished. Here I had often
" seen the torrent boil along the rocks, and heard

" The angry spirit of the waters shriek."

" At this time it was calm and silent, but its
" very silence was grim. I recollected the many
" tales I had heard of goblins and demons being
" seen or heard to yell in this den. I began to
" think the vulgar faith in such apparitions not
" so unnatural as I used to account it. Such is
" the influence of local scenery over the imagi-
" nation, and the power of the imagination over
" the understanding.

" I spent a night at the Manse of Blair, in which
" I first drew breath. The glebe is pretty large,
" and has some oak and birch on it. I walked

" out alone in the morning, to make my orisons
" in the wood where I had often strayed. I
" found in every tree, and in every spring, an
" old acquaintance:

> " Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
> " Seats of my youth, where every spot could please,"

" said I, as I traversed the ground. I stood on
" a hillock and looked around me.—The view
" was worth a thousand homilies! The days of
" other years rushed on my mind; " the me-
" mory of joys that are past, pleasant and mourn-
" ful to the soul." The sensations and emotions
" which this visit awakened in my breast, were
" such as no beauties of nature or art could
" have raised. They were such as Dr Beattie
" ascribes to the power of national music, in his
" essay on that subject. The passage is so sin-
" gularly beautiful, that I cannot forbear trans-
" cribing the whole.

" ' That man must have a hard heart, or a
" dull imagination, in whom, though endowed
" with musical sensibility, no sweet emotions
" would arise on hearing, in his riper years, or
" in a foreign land, those strains which were the
" delight of his childhood. What though they
" be inferior to the Italian? What though they
" be even irregular and rude? It is not their
" merit which, in the case supposed, would in-

" terest a native, but the charming ideas they " would recal to his mind; ideas of innocence, " simplicity, and leisure, of romantic enterprise, " and enthusiastic attachment; and of scenes " which, on recollection, we are inclined to " think that a brighter sun illuminated, a " fresher verdure crowned, and purer skies, and " happier climes, conspired to beautify, than " are to be seen in the dreary paths of care and " disappointment.'

" I hope I have profited both in mind and " body by this jaunt. During twelve days ab- " sence, I rode, or walked, or both, every day, " except two, from seven to twenty-four miles. " The change of scene, and company, kept my " mind in a state of cheerfulness, and the exer- " cise kept the animal spirits in play. I fre- " quently read on the road, walking with my " bridle in my hand."

In this extract, there is much feeling and much taste displayed; but the feeling is not spiritual, nor the taste sanctified. Imagination wanders over the romantic field, but never comes in contact with a religious reality; the " morning orisons" he poured forth " in the wood," no doubt flowed from a heart full of tenderness and emotion; and it is not for us to determine the measure of acceptance with which such sincere, though ill-informed effusions, may come up

before the Hearer of prayer. As yet, however, he knew not his own character in the judgment of God, and could hardly be humble; he knew not the character of the Being he addressed, and could not be rationally devout; neither had he any proper discernment of spiritual objects, and could not ask, in faith, for blessings untasted and undesired. In youth, when the mind of sensibility looks abroad on the scenes that call up the powers of a warm imagination, there is often a vague aspiration of the soul heavenwards; there is a movement of nature towards something grand and vast, and some undefined idea of Deity breaking in upon the soul; the language of adoration flows; and this fervent oratory passes for prayer. But when the high-wrought feeling subsides, it appears like the bubble formed on the agitated water, which breaks and leaves the stream to flow on;—so these transient and superficial acts of devotion pass away with their exciting causes, and produce no alteration on the general tenor of life and character. A Rousseau thinks himself devout, and pours the language of adoration from a full heart, when he is only sacrificing to the idol of his own imagination, and disclaims the true God whom the Scriptures reveal. The fallacy of youthful fervour is sometimes never detected, until a pain-

ful consciousness of guilt brings the soul to cry simply for mercy; and then the presumption of its high-toned orisons is recollected with shame.

In his first visit to the scene of his intended labours, there appears nothing of serious reflection on the probable consequences of his assuming so important a charge. To guide souls to eternity is no trivial office; and he who feels his own responsibility, and is aware how much his own eternal state, and theirs also, may depend on the relation he is about to form with a congregation, can hardly survey the countenances of his listening audience for the first time, without an overwhelming sense of the magnitude and the difficulty of the ministerial profession. "Who is sufficient for these things?" an apostle asks trembling. "Who is not sufficient for these things?" the carelessness and the incompetency of many self-sufficient candidates for the charge of souls, seem to demand.

The people of Moulin, it appears, received their new minister with abundance of respect and cordiality. They had been accustomed to venerate the father, and were disposed to entertain a hereditary regard for the son. His first appearances were, no doubt, able and prepossessing in their own style; and of any thing beyond correct moral sentiment, and easy elocution, they

were ill qualified to judge. Indeed, the ignorance that prevails in many places, as to the truths of religion, is often not sufficiently regarded. Even where the gospel has been preached, we may sometimes meet with instances of surprising ignorance, respecting the first principles of Christian doctrine, and the common elements of Christian experience. And if this occur even among the stated hearers of evangelical truth, what is to be expected from those to whom the peculiar doctrines of the gospel are seldom or never delivered?

Yet experience proves, that people who remain in a very unenlightened state themselves, commonly give a preference to an evangelical ministry; but that the judgment of those people, in such preference, is not founded on any just discernment of its nature, appears from this, —that if a preacher discourse fluently, and seem much interested himself, though very sparing in the production of evangelical sentiment, they will give him credit for being an able minister of the New Testament.

And perhaps the chief reason why so many people, not personally religious, hang upon the lips of an evangelical clergyman, is the earnestness of his manner, and the seriousness of his appeals, (necessarily arising from his deep concern for their salvation), appeals, which, though

the hearers remain unimpressed with the spirit of his doctrine, give a sort of natural interest to attendance on ordinances, which dies away under the languid and the lifeless ministrations of a man too moderate to break in upon the repose of feelings he thinks it impious to awaken on sacred ground.

That the people to whom Mr Stewart was sent, were very incompetent judges of his qualifications, will appear from the authentic account he himself has given in a narrative he published in his more enlightened days. "The "inhabitants of the Highlands," says he, "have, "as you know, the Scriptures in Gaelic, their "native tongue. The New Testament, the "Book of Psalms, and the Assembly's Shorter "Catechism, have long been read in the schools. "By these means, the people in this part of the "country had some knowledge of the principal "events in the history of the creation and fall "of man, and of our Saviour's life, death, resur-"rection, and ascension. They knew also some "of the great outlines of Christian doctrine; "but in general, their knowledge of the princi-"ples of Christianity was superficial and con-"fused, and their religious opinions were in ma-"ny important points erroneous. Very few, in-"deed, knew the way in which the gospel in-"forms us a sinner may be reconciled to God.

" The opinion of their own works recommend-
" ing them to the favour of God, and procuring
" a reward from his bounty, was almost univer-
" sal. It discovered itself in their ordinary
" speech, in their common remarks on more so-
" lemn occasions, and in almost every religious
" sentiment that was uttered. Their apprehen-
" sions of the demerit and consequences of sin,
" were exceedingly defective. I have heard many
" on a sick-bed, after acknowledging in common
" form that they were sinners, deny that they ever
" did any ill. And in the view of death, they have
" derived their hopes of future happiness from the
" reflection, that they never had wronged any per-
" son. Very few seemed to annex any meaning to
" their words, when they said they expected par-
" don for Christ's sake. Being without the true
" knowledge of God, of Christ, of the Gospel,
" of their own character and state, they lived, as
" might be expected, to themselves and to the
" world. They were not, indeed, addicted to
" open vice, if we except lying and swearing.
" They were rather distinguished for sobriety,
" industry, and peaceable behaviour; but they
" were destitute of religious principle. Men
" may love and adore an unseen God, but
" they cannot love or serve an unknown God.
" They may dread pain, or death, or eternal mi-
" sery, but that is not to fear God. Our people

" were alike strangers to the true fear and true " love of God. They had evidently little con- " cern about the present, or the future state of " their souls. They attended church, and par- " took of the sacraments, and rested from their " work on the Sabbath. But these outward ob- " servances were almost the only appearances of " religion. There was little reading of the Scrip- " tures at home; little religious instructing of " children; hardly any family-worship; no reli- " gious conversation; no *labouring* in any man- " ner for the meat which endureth unto ever- " lasting life. Even on the Lord's day, most of " the time was spent in loitering, visiting, and " worldly talk; and on other days, religion was " scarcely thought of."

Such was the state of the people among whom Mr Stewart was appointed to labour. Let us next hear, from the same authentic report, what his own feelings were on coming among them. " I " was settled," says he, " minister of this parish " in 1786, at the age of twenty-two. Although " I was not a ' despiser' of what was sacred, yet " I felt nothing of the power of religion on my " soul. I had no relish for its exercises, nor any " enjoyment in the duties of my office, public " or private. A regard to character, and the " desire of being acceptable to my people, if not " the only motives, were certainly the principal

" motives that prompted me to any measure of
" diligence or exertion. I was quite well pleas-
" ed when a diet of catechising was ill attended,
" because my work was the sooner over; and I
" was always satisfied with the reflection, that if
" people were not able, or did not choose to at-
" tend on these occasions, that was no fault of
" mine. I well remember, that I often hurried
" over that exercise with a good deal of impa-
" tience, that I might get home to join a dancing
" party, or read a sentimental novel. My pub-
" lic addresses and prayers were, for the most
" part, cold and formal. They were little re-
" garded by the hearers at the time, and as little
" recollected afterwards. I preached against par-
" ticular vices, and inculcated particular virtues.
" But I had no notion of the necessity of a
" radical change of principle; for I had not
" learned to know the import of those assertions
" of Scripture, that " the carnal mind is enmity
" against God;" that if any man be in Christ, he
" is a new creature; and that, " except a man
" be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot
" enter into the kingdom of God." I spoke of
" making the fruit good; but I was not aware
" that the tree was corrupt, and must first be it-
" self made good, before it could bear good
" fruit. The people, however, were satisfied
" with what they heard, and neither they nor I

" looked farther. Almost the only remark made
" by any on the discourse, after leaving church,
" was, " What a good sermon we got to-day!"
" to which another would coldly assent, adding,
" " Many good advices do we get, if we did but
" follow them." Such a heartless compliment
" was all the improvement made of the discourse,
" and I believe all the fruit of my preaching.
" The hearers readily gave me credit for a desire
" to do my duty; and they as readily took credit
" to themselves for a willingness to be taught
" their duty. But whether any improvement
" was actually going forward, whether there
" was any increase of the fruits of righteousness,
" was a point which gave neither minister nor
" people much concern.

" If there were any persons in the parish at
" the time, who lived a life of faith, under the
" influence of pure evangelical principles, I did
" not know them, nor was I qualified to discern
" and understand what spirit they were of. I
" have since had reason to believe that there
" were a very few spiritually-minded persons;
" but their life was hid, and they had left this
" world, all but one or two, before they could
" acknowledge me as a brother. I was in a
" great measure ignorant of the peculiar doctrines
" of Christianity, the corruption of the human
" will, the fulness and freeness of the redemption

" which is in Christ, justification by faith, and
" the necessity of the Holy Spirit's agency on
" the human soul; and what I knew not myself
" I could not declare to others. I never thought
" of praying for divine direction in my search
" after divine truth. I believe I had read the
" Confession of Faith of our church before I de-
" clared my belief of its contents; but I had
" taken little pains to compare it with the Scrip-
" tures. I certainly did not distinctly under-
" stand, nor was I at all persuaded of the truth
" of many propositions contained in it. Yet I
" do not remember that I had any scruples about
" subscribing it as the confession of my faith,
" or about declaring my assent to it solemnly,
" in the presence of that congregation whereof
" I was about to take the pastoral charge."

From such a ministry, operating on such a population, what result was to be expected? A ministry which takes human nature as it finds it, and, without enforcing the necessity of regeneration, labours to smooth and polish it into character by precepts of morality, and dissuasives from vice;—a ministry, which, overlooking the momentous fact of man's enmity to God, neglects to preach reconciliation through the blood of the cross, and leaves sinners unbesought to reconciliation, and the abandonment of disaffection towards their Maker;—a ministry, which

proposes salvation to men, not on the grant of a Saviour held forth as the object of immediate trust, but on some uncertain terms of sincere obedience, and dispensing grace, the extent of which no man pretends to define;—a ministry, that has not for its object the calling of sinners to repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, that they may be saved freely by grace, and enjoy the comfort of hope, as well as of holiness, in the present time;—such a ministry cannot be effectual, because it falls not in with the method of saving sinners which God has revealed in the New Testament dispensation. He who works according to this method, may not always succeed; but to succeed in working against it, is impossible.

That Mr Stewart's early ministrations were exceedingly defective in point of doctrine, there is sufficient evidence extant, in a small manuscript volume of sermons which were preached in that period; and which he kept back from the flames, to which the rest of them were heartily consigned, as a monument of his former ignorance, with the following judgment inscribed:—

Juveniles ineptiæ,
temporibus ignorantiæ cæcitatisque editæ,
odore Evangelii nullo imbutæ,
multis scatentes erroribus,
miserandæ, abjiciendæ;
tantum clementiâ Dei misericordis,
Filii sui unigeniti gratiâ,
ignoscendæ.
1817 *.

The volume is dated 1788, the above character was inscribed in 1817. The first discourse has for its motto, "Be ye stedfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." And the following extract from the first page will shew what his doctrinal views at that time were. "In a world abounding with iniquity, the exhortation which a preacher of the gospel has often-

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* Thus translated by his son, Mr D. S. medical student.

Youthful Trifles,
produced in the season of ignorance and darkness,
possessing nothing of the savour of the gospel,
abounding in errors,
fit only to be pitied, fit only to be destroyed;
to be pardoned solely by the clemency of a merciful God,
through the grace of his only-begotten Son.

" est occasion to repeat to his hearers, is, to for-
" sake their sins, to turn from their evil ways,
" to cease to do evil, to learn to do well. We
" hope that this exhortation is not repeated so
" often in vain. We hope there are persons
" who may have been addicted to evil habits,
" on whom the Spirit of God may have
" wrought, by the preaching of the word, or
" the administration of ordinances, with such
" power as to make them forsake their evil
" practices. Such a hope we must be allowed
" to indulge, for it is one of our chief encourage-
" ments in the prosecution of our labour. But,
" my friends, after you have attained thus
" much; after you have once purified your
" hearts, and reformed your lives; neither your
" labour nor ours is yet at an end. A reso-
" lution once formed is of no use unless it be
" kept. Purposes of amendment and improve-
" ment are good for the time in which they
" are made; but if they be afterwards broken,
" what profit do they bring? Therefore it is
" still our part to urge the exhortation in my
" text, and it is your part to lay it to heart,—
" not to think it enough that you have once at-
" tained a certain degree of holiness, or imagine
" that your business is then done, but to exert
" all your powers to continue stedfast, immove-
" able; to go on improving and abounding more

" and more in the work of the Lord." Here, in referring to what he taught, and what they had received, (and we have quoted all the doctrine the sermon contains), there is no mention of the name which is above every name; and it is remarkable that the Saviour is passed by, as a person with whom neither the preacher nor his hearers had any thing to do. How different is this from the spirit of him who " determined to know nothing save Jesus " Christ, and him crucified." How could souls be won to Christ, when his name, glory, and work, were concealed? What stedfastness could they realize, but stability in self-righteousness, who were not rooted, and grounded, and built up in Christ? Such a ministry might succeed in all its aims, and yet not save a single soul; for it is possible to be all Mr Stewart commends, and yet want that faith, without which it is impossible to please God.

In their minister, the people of Moulin had an example of conduct morally correct and honourable; they had a guide amiable in society, respectable for his talents and literature, and by no means inattentive to official duties, either in public or in private; and they were mutually pleased.

Perhaps not a few parishes in Britain, who

rise no higher in point of religious character than they, labour under greater disadvantages, as to means of instruction. Such means, however, proved ineffectual there, and must in every place alike fail; because they are not the means appointed by God for reconciling the world unto himself, that they may be saved.

In the first years of his ministry, Mr Stewart seems to have prosecuted his favourite studies in metaphysics and philology. The Gaelic language, in particular, became an object of favourite research; and though he had few helps, and at the time of his ordination was but barely competent to preach in it with freedom, he soon became critically versed in its unwritten idioms and syntax. "When I come to speak of my "Gaelic studies," says he, in a letter written during his attendance at the Divinity Hall, "I "am somewhat at a loss what to say in vindica- "tion of myself. I find I am not able to give a "regular account of my plan of study, or of my "progress. All I can say is, that I have been "reading the Gaelic Testament, and the small "treatise I have from you; but with what pro- "fit I cannot well determine. When I meet "with a word or phrase that I do not under- "stand, I have neither master, dictionary, nor "grammar to apply to, which much retards my "progress in learning the language. When

" you consider, then, my unfavourable situation
" in this respect, I hope you will think I am
" not wholly without excuse, if my knowledge
" does not increase fast. I am not a little cha-
" grined at being disappointed of Mr John S.'s
" Gaelic grammar, on which I had depended so
" much. The Hebrew goes on better. I am
" provided with a good Bible, grammar, and
" dictionary, besides an analysis of the Book of
" Genesis. I go on analysing passages of Scrip-
" ture with some facility. I thank you with all
" my heart for your exhortation to go on with
" my studies. You pathetically lament your
" own inability to accomplish the wish of your
" heart, and do justice to the languages; and
" while you exclaim,

" O mihi præteritos referat si Jupiter annos,"

" you call upon those that are young to take
" up the task. Whatever else is in your power,
" I am confident of one thing that has not left
" you, and that is, the power of rousing the ar-
" dour of the young,—of some of them at least.
" I never read your letter over, without being
" animated with the keenest desire of becoming
" acquainted with the language, manners, and
" history of my honest progenitors; and then,
" transporting myself some generations back-

" wards, I converse with the hardy sons of the " hills. I admire and imbibe your generous " spirit and enthusiastic patriotism, which in- " deed has characterized my country."

This patience of study was crowned with success; for both in Gaelic and in Hebrew he acquired such skill, as to be eminently useful to the church in his own time, while he has left fruits of his proficiency to benefit future ages.

Of his metaphysical acumen, he gave a specimen on the publication of Dr Gregory's literary and philosophical essays, in which it was proposed to demonstrate the moral liberty of man on mathematical principles. Mr Stewart wrote him a letter of many folio pages on these essays; controverting his positions, and pointing out what appeared to him inconclusive in the celebrated physician's reasonings. These animadversions passed through the hands of the greatest metaphysician of his time, Professor Dugald Stewart; and Dr Gregory deemed them worthy of a long and elaborate reply. This correspondence might gratify a philosophical reader, but we must hasten to circumstances in Mr Stewart's life more generally interesting, and to himself of far greater importance.

For some years after his settlement at Moulin, his mind seems to have been left unimpressed with any serious concern either about his own

spiritual state, or that of others. The set time to favour him, however, was approaching; and among the means employed to interest his heart in divine things, his connection with Mr Black, then minister of St Madoes, occupies a prominent place. Mr Black was nearly of the same age with himself; but having been called to an early knowledge of the truth, he was in spiritual life greatly his elder; for while the one walked uncertainly, and with doubtful perceptions of the truth, in the twilight of grace, the other, with open face and assured steps, enjoying the Sun of Righteousness as he went, proceeded from strength to strength in the everlasting way.

Directed by an invisible power, Mr Stewart had been led to pay a visit to Mr Black, at St Madoes. Instead of repelling his advances, and looking down with a mixture of pity and disdain on the unequal attainments of his guest, Mr Black received him with great frankness, and without bringing forward his own peculiar views, left what he had, as it were, incidentally seen and heard, to operate with silent influence on his heart. "Wisdom is justified of her children," and this unobtrusive conduct of Mr Black produced the happiest effects. Mr Stewart always referred to a conversation with his friend at St Madoes, as connected with the commencement of his spiritual life. Mr Black, as they sat

together in an arbour in the garden, took occasion to describe the triumphant dying scene of a deceased sister. Such a fact was not to be accounted for on Mr Stewart's principles; and the event made an impression on his mind never afterwards wholly effaced. Many years after this incident, he writes, " The dear name (of Mr " Black) is always associated with my first per- " ceptions of divine truth and redeeming love. " My thoughts took a long flight backwards, and " the parlour and the garden at St Madoes, ap- " peared to me like " an upper chamber in Je- " rusalem, and like the garden of Gethsemane." Happy is it when Christians so improve such apparently casual interviews, that the savour of them is grateful to the mind after many days.

There was something now at work in Mr Stewart's heart, that would not let him rest from inquiries after truth; and though several years revolved before any decided manifestation of change appeared, yet, from that hour, his midnight darkness had passed, and he was hastening gradually and imperceptibly to the day of greater things.

In 1791, he entered into a correspondence with Mr Black, which was continued with great regularity and the utmost freedom of communication on either side, until the period of Mr Black's lamented death. From these

letters, which of themselves would make an interesting volume, we shall select a few, which will exhibit the progressive state of Mr Stewart's mind in the knowledge of religious truth, better than any other method of representation we could adopt. These letters are perfectly artless; and of an active minister's letters, it may be remarked in general, that a want of leisure, and the tedium of composition derived from the quantity of written preparation needful for the pulpit, seldom allow them to be any thing more than the unstudied and hasty expression of present feeling and present duty. The first letter addressed to Mr B. is dated Moulin, October 3. 1791, and is as follows:—

" Dear Sir,

" I cannot but regret that I missed the plea-
" sure of seeing you when you called a fortnight
" ago at Moulin, though sister told me your
" stay was but short. I must make it up to
" myself by staying the longer next time I go
" to St Madoes. Mr ——— too, favoured me
" with a call. As soon as I heard of it, it
" struck me that it was a favour I was not en-
" titled to. He is a man for whom I have a
" regard, though I have as yet little acquaint-
" ance with him, but that is really my own
" fault, for he has been kind enough to make

" advances toward an acquaintance, though I " have been so negligent as not to return them. " I will certainly wait on him the next time I " go to Perth, but I have need of the good of- " fices of a friend to introduce me, and bespeak " his good opinion.

" I thank you sincerely for your present of " Scott's Narrative. I had taken the liberty to " carry it to one or two places, and shew it to " some of my friends, who were much gratified " with the perusal of it. The writer is a strik- " ing example of the efficacy of the *ordinary* " appointed means of divine grace in enlighten- " ing the understanding and reforming the " heart; and in that view, I think, his example " affords strong encouragement for using these " means, studying the scriptures, and prayer. " In this, I apprehend, chiefly consists the dif- " ference between his case and that of eminent " saints, from St Paul downwards, who have " been converted by *extraordinary* means. One " feels a curiosity to see his letters to Mr New- " ton at the time he began a correspondence " with him on subjects of controversy; how- " ever, it is probable nothing more would be " learned from them, than from the account he " himself gives of their spirit and intention.

" Sister and I have lately been reading a " volume of sermons by Mr Haweis, the same,

" I think, to whom Mr Newton addressed the
" letters, containing an account of his life be-
" fore his conversion. These sermons contain a
" compendium of Christian doctrine, arranged
" in a systematic form, and are executed in a
" masterly manner. From many hints and re-
" commendations in Newton's letters, and from
" this memoir of Scott's, I long to try to preach
" a course of such sermons in Gaelic to my
" people, (English is out of the question); but
" I have a diffidence of my qualification for it,
" and a shyness, I believe I may properly call
" it, of discussing or inculcating subjects which
" they have not been much accustomed to hear,
" which has hitherto prevented me from doing
" more than touching on these subjects occa-
" sionally. I dare say I have just the same
" dread of being charged with filling my people's
" heads with uncharitable notions and specula-
" tive whims, instead of teaching social duties,
" as Mr Scott had of being termed a Methodist.
" Yet it is as clear as day-light, that one may
" just as well think to gather grapes of thorns,
" as to make virtues grow on the wild stock of
" man's natural heart. The operation of en-
" grafting must surely be first performed, or
" Apollos, or Paul himself, may water for ages
" without effect. I hope you received a note I
" sent several weeks ago, with some kind of ex-

" planation of those names of places you had " mentioned to me. I am just now employed " in collecting a few more articles of information " for Sir J. Sinclair, which I hope will finish " my work in that way.

" May I expect a letter from you at your " leisure? The avocations of the summer and " autumn are nearly over. As the evenings " lengthen, I wish to settle myself down to the " enjoyments and pursuits of the fire-side. I " have had in my time one hobby-horse after an- " other. One while mathematics, another while " grammar, another while statistics. I tired of " them all. My mind has not that spring in it " which will carry it keenly forward through " any pursuit for a length of time without some " spur. I wish to fix my attention at last on " some more interesting objects, and, like Scott, " study my Bible. In this and other objects " connected with it, I shall wish to ask some- " times your help or encouragement. I know, " however, that I shall often feel the same diffi- " dence and reluctance in writing you on such " subjects, as I do in playing the fiddle before a " connoisseur, but I shall get over it."

The above letter is very characteristic of that openness of heart, and freedom in disclosing his sentiments, for which the writer was distinguish-

ed through life. On this occasion, his correspondent acted a wiser part than to check the communications of his friend, by premature animadversions; and, by a compliance with that rule,—"him that is weak in the faith receive ye, "but not to doubtful disputation," proved the efficacy of its lenient spirit. That he regarded the proposed correspondence in a providential light, appears from the following extract from his diary in reference to it:

"*Oct.* 10. 1791.—Received a letter lately "from Mr Stewart of Moulin, in which he ex- "presses a wish to be taught the way of God "more perfectly. Scott's Force of Truth seems "to have been blessed to him. I answered his "letter last week."

In answering his letter, without receding from his own ground, he spake kindly to his friend, and, as if the distance was small between them, encouraged him to come on. "I was favour- "ed," says he in reply, "with yours of the 2d "curt. which gave me sincere pleasure. The "confidence you are pleased to place in me, "merits a suitable return, and however unqua- "lified I feel myself to give the least advice to "one from whom I should be most willing to "receive instruction; I am exceedingly ready "to enter into a friendly correspondence on the "important topics you have suggested, which

" may prove mutually pleasing and profitable. " From the frankness with which you have " communicated your thoughts to me, I confess " I feel an interest in what relates to you, and " a sincere desire to enter into closer and more " intimate habits. It gives me pleasure to find " you have read Scott's narrative with so much " satisfaction. His case, though remarkable, is " not altogether singular. There have been se- " veral instances of persons entering into the " office of the ministry, totally devoid of real " religion, who have afterwards been brought " to a happy change in their sentiments and con- " duct. Mr Walker of Truro (whose works, " if you are not already acquainted with them, " are well worthy of your perusal) is as striking " an instance of it as Mr Scott. The means em- " ployed were of the *ordinary* kind too. If I " recollect right, it was by means of a conversa- " tion with a pious friend, that Mr Walker re- " ceived his first serious impressions of the truth. " The effects produced were great. From being " a dry useless preacher to a careless unconcern- " ed congregation, he became a zealous and faith- " ful minister of the gospel, and was the honour- " ed instrument of the conversion of many souls. " I have likewise by me a short account of Mr " Sheriff, the first minister of Lady Glenorchy's " Chapel, in Edinburgh, who experienced a like

" happy change, a considerable time after he was
" a preacher. He died a young man, in the midst
" of his years and usefulness, but not before he
" had given a very full and comfortable testi-
" mony to the truth of those doctrines, which
" are derided by the world under the name of
" Methodism and Enthusiasm.

" I heartily approve of your design of preach-
" ing to your people a set of sermons on the
" great and leading doctrines of the gospel.
" A general neglect of that kind of preach-
" ing, is, I am persuaded, the chief reason why
" so many ministers do so little good in their
" parishes. Till men are thoroughly convinced
" of their lost and undone state by nature, and
" brought to a simple reliance on the blood and
" spirit of Christ, as the only appointment of
" God for the salvation of sinners, all attempts
" to reform the life and manners are vain and
" fruitless. Outward restraints may have a tem-
" porary effect, but the heart will remain un-
" changed, and the power of sin unsubdued,
" till the grace of God in the gospel is under-
" stood, felt, and believed. A skilful physician
" will probe the wound before he attempts to
" administer the healing balm, and a faithful
" minister must plainly lay before his people
" their sin and danger, if he would hope to be
" successful in promoting their reformation."

In his next letter, Mr Stewart gives an account of the state of religion in his parish, which shews, that even then he was diligent and conscientious, and much interested to have his people embrace all he himself knew of divine truth. "They are in general far from being ignorant. "As few of them read Gaelic, and scarcely one "of them can read English with any profit, their "knowledge and opinions on religious subjects "are almost entirely derived from their teach-"ers. I find them sufficiently ripe on the doc-"trine of the atonement of Christ, but they "seem to have less apprehension of that of im-"puted righteousness. I have found it requi-"site to insist a good deal on this point in my "preaching, and at my diets of examination "a stranger would be ready sometimes to mis-"take me for an Antinomian. I hope, how-"ever, there is little hazard of such an error "gaining ground here, for they have very con-"vincing ideas of the obligations of morality. "On examining the schools through my parish, "of which there are several, taught by persons "who undertake the business of their own ac-"cord, I find, that though the children learn "to read tolerably, and to repeat questions, &c. "yet they learn very little of Christian know-"ledge. I have therefore proposed to some of "my heritors to get a Sunday's school erected in

" this village, where the children may be taught " the catechism in Gaelic, and be made to un- " derstand and attend to what they repeat. " The gentlemen approve of it, and I hope I " shall soon get it established. My English " discourses are of so little use, that it is with " reluctance I sit down to compose one. I am " frequently for weeks, perhaps months, with- " out writing any English. This season, as " Christmas and New-Year's day both fell on " Sunday, I thought I could not well avoid " writing a sermon for each of them. My texts " were, Luke ii. 13, 14. and Job xiv. 14.

" You may be a little surprised, perhaps, at " my writing always about myself, and my " doings. This was my intention from the " time that I solicited the favour of your cor- " respondence, that I might have the benefit " of your remarks and corrections. Thus far " I have told only what could give myself plea- " sure in the telling. By and bye, if I am en- " couraged, my confessions must come in their " turn. That is indeed a less pleasant task, " but I hope it may turn out a profitable one."

Mr Black's letter in answer to this, is well worth inserting.

" I received your letter in due course, and " with much satisfaction. I acknowledge my- " self to blame for not answering it sooner.

" There is no subject can be more agreeable or
" interesting to me, than what relates to your-
" self. I shall use the like freedom in my turn,
" and by a candid communication of my un-
" disguised sentiments, endeavour to repay the
" confidence with which you are pleased to
" honour me. I believe, from the strain of
" your letters, that our sentiments in material
" points pretty much coincide. The doctrine
" of imputed righteousness which you mention
" having insisted on so much of late, appears to
" me the grand and important article which
" marks the difference between the preachers of
" free grace, and those of the legal or Arminian
" cast. If this doctrine be well understood, and
" firmly believed, it will pave the way for the
" reception of all the other doctrines of grace.
" And upon no other scheme, I think, can the
" glory of the Redeemer, and the hope of poor
" sinners, be firmly established. I would not
" violently contend for any term or mode of
" expression, that is not evidently scriptural;
" but, till a better can be found, why should
" we give up the term *imputed* righteousness,
" since the idea expressed by it is abundantly
" plain and simple, and we think clearly found-
" ed in scripture. When a sinner is truly con-
" vinced of sin, and perceives the dreadful dan-
" ger to which he is exposed by his wilful and

" numberless transgressions of the law of God,
" the most important question to him in the
" world is, How shall I escape the wrath of
" God? How shall I obtain the favour of my
" Maker? The gospel, in this case, points to
" the atonement of Christ, and discovers to the
" anxious sinner's mind, in his all perfect sa-
" crifice, a full security against the day of wrath.
" But the gospel does more. It speaks of
" eternal life as the hope of believers. Upon
" what foundation does this hope rest? Upon
" my own imperfect doings, or my Saviour's
" finished obedience? It makes little differ-
" ence to say, that the works of believers are
" wrought by the Spirit of Christ, and in this
" view may in some degree be meritorious. Still
" they are imperfect works, and the hope that
" is built on them must be a fluctuating hope:
" To entitle me to entertain the well-grounded
" hope of eternal life, I must be able to plead,
" at the tribunal of God, a righteousness broad
" as the commandments of God, and free from
" the least mixture of sin. And such a right-
" eousness the gospel reveals for the salvation
" of every guilty sinner, who sees and feels his
" need of it, and is willing to be saved in this
" humbling, self-abasing manner. This I take
" to be the plain meaning of imputed righteous-
" ness; and here is the spring of all true holi-

" ness. The belief of this precious, peace-in-
" spiring truth, gives a vigour and energy to
" the mind unknown before. The love of
" Christ constrains to obedience. But I cannot
" now enter on the practical influence of this
" blessed doctrine. I hope you know some-
" thing of it in experience. A good life is the
" best refutation of the objections of adversa-
" ries."

" *P. S.* If you had an opportunity, I should
" be glad to be favoured with a reading of some
" of your late compositions for the pulpit, part-
" ly, on the peculiar doctrines of the gospel."

The request in the postscript drew from Mr Stewart the following:—" Your favour of the
" 13th January reached me in course. I wish
" to get rid, as soon as may be, of the forma-
" lities of apologies; however, I must mention
" as the chief cause of my long silence, a visit
" I made to Fife, to see my friends in St An-
" drews, and at Kilconquhar, the name of Mr
" Small's new parish. This not only occupied
" some weeks of my time, but likewise put it
" out of my power to comply, so soon as I wish-
" ed, with your kind request of sending you
" some of my compositions for the pulpit, for
" I wished to carry some of my late produc-
" tions with me to read to Mr Small, before I

" should send them out of my custody. Since
" my return, I have been occupied one week
" with a fair which is held annually in this vil-
" lage, and which breaks in much on my time,
" and another with a visit from my brother.
" I now comply with pleasure with your re-
" quest, and send you two sermons by way of
" specimen, composed, the one for Christmas
" last, the other for New-Year's Day, but not
" delivered till the 8th of January. It would be
" a childish kind of shyness to refuse to sub-
" mit these to your judgment, because I hope
" to profit by your remarks, whether you ap-
" prove or censure. They are free from one
" blemish, that is, an elaborate and polished
" style. However sensible I am to the beauties
" of style, yet I cannot help considering a high
" degree of polish and ornament as out of
" place, and improper in compositions for the
" pulpit. In the discourse upon Luke ii. 13,
" 14. I have stated some of the leading doc-
" trines of Christianity in a way which I be-
" lieve to be agreeable to reason. You can
" judge how far my sentiments are conformable
" to the Calvinistic scheme, of which, (so far
" as I know it from what Calvinistic writers
" say of it in their writings, for I have not
" read Calvin's works), I profess myself a sin-
" cere votary. The sermon from Job xiv. 14.

" is my first attempt to arrange and put into " writing my thoughts on a subject of some " obscurity and difficulty. I have endeavour- " ed to follow scripture closely as my guide; " and I have attained to a decided opinion on " the subject. I am by no means sure that I " have been successful in stating my opinion " distinctly; and still less, that I have support- " ed it properly. On this head I must request " your judgment and remarks; for you will al- " low me to observe, that by asking a reading " of these discourses on the footing of friend- " ship and intimacy, you have come under a " kind of tacit obligation to say how far they " please you. This I shall look for at your " leisure and conveniency. I lately received, " though I know not by whom transmitted, a " copy of the resolutions of the Members of " your Presbytery friendly to the abolition of " the Slave-Trade, and of the abridgement of " the evidence before the House of Commons, " drawn up at their desire. I believe I shall " find use for this pamphlet, in handing it " about among some of my neighbours. I have " circulated, also, some copies of an address on " the propriety of abstaining from sugar and " rum, and not altogether without effect; at " least, the effect of this short spirited address " on myself and household has been steady, for

" we have not tasted a particle of sugar for some
" weeks past. People may say that it is pre-
" suming, or assuming, or interfering, or med-
" dling too much, for the clergy to come for-
" ward with petitions to Parliament; but none
" can tell me that I do any thing inconsistent
" with my duty, when I sacrifice my taste to
" my feelings, and to my indignant sense of
" wrong, so far as to abstain from this abhorred
" luxury, till the rearing of it is put upon a
" different footing from the present. I am im-
" patient to see what will be done in Parliament
" this session."

Perhaps some may judge Mr Stewart's abstinence from colonial produce, on the ground of the inhumanities that accompany the manufacture of it, a needless scruple. And probably, among all who at that time raised an indignant voice against the atrocities of the slave-trade, not many had sufficient resolution to deny their taste for the sake of principle. His determination, at least, shewed a decision of mind, which, though in a little thing, little minds will never imitate. A single conquest of this kind does much to promote the ascendancy of mind; and it is by inuring the senses to the controul of an enlightened judgment, that men proceed in

the formation of high and independent character.

When he consented to submit his pulpit compositions to Mr Black's review, it doubtless sprung from some distrust of his own sentiments, and a desire to obtain the opinion of one whom he considered well qualified to say whether his views were correct; and as he was willing to learn, so his friend was not reluctant to give the judgment he sought. His letter affords an example of *faithfulness* without censure, and commendation without compromising truth; and as it may give some insight into the strain of Mr Stewart's preaching at that time, it may not be improperly inserted at length.

" I wrote you, about two months ago, a " hasty scrawl, in which I promised to give " you my sentiments at large, on the sermons " you were kind enough to send me, and which " I now return with many thanks. I have read " them, upon the whole, with pleasure, but " shall take the liberty now to make some re- " marks, where I think they are liable to ex- " ception.

" The first discourse on Ananias pleases me " much. In the second discourse on the same " subject, you speak of " adherence to truth

" improving into complete righteousness, and " obtaining eternal life from the God of salva- " tion." This appears to me an unscriptural " mode of speaking. I know, " that without " holiness no man shall see the Lord ;" and that " all pretensions to faith, which are not justified " by a life of sincere obedience to the will of " God, are vain and delusive ; but I read, at the " same time, that eternal life is the gift of God, " and that the complete righteousness, on ac- " count of which we are accepted in the sight " of God, is not a righteousness wrought in us, " or done by us, but imputed for our justifica- " tion, and received by faith. The passage al- " luded to in the 24th Psalm, I suppose, ap- " plies to Christ.

" The two discourses on Christian stedfast- " ness, contain many excellent practical instruc- " tions, but I cannot help thinking they might " have been written in a more evangelical strain; " the exhortations to duty might have been in- " terwoven more closely with the peculiar doc- " trines of the gospel. I would not say " that " God hath promised his grace on condition of " our exerting our own endeavours," because " this supposes that these endeavours give some " claim to the divine assistance; but I would " say, that the promise of divine assistance does " not supersede the necessity of our own exer-

" tions, but affords the highest encouragement
" to perseverance in them. So I think the mat-
" ter is clearly stated, Phil. ii. 12, 13. The
" promise of divine assistance is proposed as the
" motive to labour and diligence. The para-
" graph beginning—" Your Creator," &c. in
" my humble apprehension, is liable to much
" greater exception. I do not believe that man,
" in his natural state, has in him " the princi-
" ples of virtue." He has reason and conscience,
" it is true, but these are so depraved and cor-
" rupted by sin, that till the soul is renewed by
" the Spirit of God, he is incapable of doing any
" thing that is truly good, or acceptable in the
" sight of God. The way of proposing religion
" as a task, which, with the assistance of divine
" grace, must be done in order to obtain the
" promised reward, is, I conceive, unsafe, be-
" cause it leads men to entertain ideas of their
" own powers, and of their own merit, which
" appear to me to have no foundation in the
" word of God. Men must be dealt with as
" sinners, who are saved wholly by grace; and
" duty should be pressed not as a task, giving
" some sort of claim to future reward, but as a
" service of love and gratitude, flowing from
" new evangelical principles, and producing a
" meetness for the glorious inheritance of the
" saints in light.

" The sermon " on the death of Stephen," is " beautifully written.—" The faithful servant " of God *forced* to swallow the draught." Does " not this suppose a reluctance inconsistent " with resignation? " Favours of *fortune*,"— " I would rather say *providence*. I am best of " all pleased with the following discourses on " affliction in youth. They discover con- " siderable acquaintance with human nature, " and human life, and I hope I have read them " with profit. " Piety springing up naturally in " the soul,"—not very consistent with what the " scripture says,—" The imagination of men's " hearts are evil, only evil, from their youth."

" Thus, my dear friend, I have given you " my sentiments with the utmost freedom. I " hope you will excuse the long delay, and gra- " tify me with a letter soon. What do you " think of the present state of things in the " country? I shall be glad to hear you are well. " May the Lord abundantly bless your minis- " try, and spare you long for usefulness."

Mr Stewart's next letter enters still more fully into his own state of mind, and will be perused with interest.

Moulin, January 27. 1793.

" I have put off writing to you from week " to week, till I should get your observations " on my discourses, which I received two days " ago. I should be sorry, by any further delay, " to give you room to suspect that your criti- " cisms could fail of being highly acceptable. " I think I am sincere, and I hope you will be- " lieve me to be so, when I say that I perfectly " approve and concur in your censures. I " think I told you when I sent them, that I " now discovered many things in them myself, " which I could by no means sustain as just " and orthodox. I allowed these passages, how- " ever, to remain, and to pass under your re- " view, purposely, that you might have some- " thing which you might censure with freedom " and confidence, in hopes that you might " then venture to point out other errors or " faults, which might more easily have escaped " myself, or which perhaps I might not be so " ready to acknowledge. You will readily observe " from this acknowledgement, that my senti- " ments on some important points of doctrine " have altered a good deal in the course of a few " years, and even since I entered on the office of " the ministry. Whatever erroneous opinions " I formerly entertained, I cannot say that my " persuasion of their truth was firm, or that my

" mind was fully made up on them. Indeed,
" I seem to myself to have been an indolent
" inquirer, and to have taken up my religious
" opinions at hazard, from such books as hap-
" pened to come in my way, and which I heard
" well spoken of. I have learnt, however, that
" many of these were unscriptural and errone-
" ous. I have been much indebted on this oc-
" casion to the writings of Doddridge, Baxter,
" Newton, &c. I have often consulted with
" great satisfaction Mr Scott's book which you
" gave me, and for which I hope I have thank-
" ed you before now. After attending carefully
" to my own mind, I think I do give a firm
" and hearty assent to the doctrines which these
" writers maintain, and which appear to be ex-
" pressly asserted in the scriptures. How hap-
" pens it, can you tell me, that this persuasion,
" or this belief, (if I may venture to call it so),
" makes so very little impression on my heart,
" and is accompanied with so little emotion or
" desire? I feel wonderfully little of those ar-
" dours of gratitude and love, of fear, or of de-
" sire, which are always described as the effects
" of a firm belief of the gospel. But indeed I
" need not ask you a question which I can too
" well answer myself. But it is no matter; I
" will read with pleasure any answer with
" which you may favour me. I send along

" with this, two volumes of Cowper's poems,
" which I think you once told me you had not
" seen. I am sure you will be pleased with them.
" I suspect I promised you a perusal of them;
" if I did, I have been too late in sending them.

" You ask me my opinion on the state of
" public affairs. I could say a great deal, I
" think, on this subject. A more critical pe-
" riod, and more fraught with important and
" even alarming consequences, has seldom oc-
" curred. Last night's post brought us the in-
" telligence of the execution of the unfortunate
" King of France. Wretched king of a more
" wretched state! What a spectacle is that
" people become to the world! The judgment
" of Ephraim seems to have been pronounced
" against them, " Let them alone." It is a
" most awful object for a spectator to observe
" from a distance. Hurricanes and earthquakes
" are nothing to it. " Happy the man," says
" Cowper, " who sees a God employed in all
" the good and ill that chequer life." It is the
" only consideration that can inspire composure,
" that the Lord reigns over all, that he himself
" rides in the whirlwind, " and directs the storm,"
" This kingdom, too, has received a gentle but
" serious warning. I am hopeful that the Al-
" mighty has directed our legislators to such
" measures as may be the means of preserving

" quietness at home, and perhaps of warding
" off danger from abroad. I do not think there
" is yet any reason to apprehend commotions,
" or an attempt at revolutions in this country.
" But if we are to guess at the fate that awaits
" us from the progress of irreligion and licen-
" tiousness among us, what have we not to ap-
" prehend? And if we do not take warning
" by the fate of France, and amend at least
" some of our ways, who knows how soon our
" turn may come to be torn asunder by civil
" tumults?—for licentiousness, turbulence, vio-
" lence, and anarchy, seem to be but the natu-
" ral consequences of that wealth and prospe-
" rity in which we at present glory so much.
" At this day, when we say, with no little self-
" applause and exultation, " that we are rich,
" and increased in goods," how little do we re-
" flect that we are, in the most important re-
" spects, " wretched, and miserable, and poor,
" and blind, and naked!" If I were a politician,
" I would ask, where is the necessity for such
" mighty preparations for war with France?
" It is enough for me, however, to believe that
" Providence has some wise end or other to
" serve by that measure, and that his people
" are secure under his protection, whatever dis-
" turbances happen around them.

" I long to ask a favour of you,—will you " tell me how soon I may do it? It is to get a " reading of some of your discourses. If I shall " read them with partiality, which must be the " case, it shall be with so much the more pro- " fit."

From Mr Black in answer.

" Dear Sir, *St Madoes*, 18*th March* 1793.

" I thank you sincerely for your last letter. " Your taking in so good part the few plain re- " marks I made on your discourses, was nothing " more than I expected; yet it cannot fail to " heighten the regard I formerly entertained " for you. I am persuaded the change which " has taken place in your sentiments within " these few years, is not only comfortable to " your own mind, but likewise highly bene- " ficial to your people. There is but one way " of preaching, as our friend Mr Newton ob- " serves, which God in every age has been " pleased to own and bless. By the wise men " of the world, this way is accounted foolishness, " and those who adopt it are deemed weak hot- " brained enthusiasts; but it is found in expe- " rience to be the power of God, and the wis- " dom of God. It is my earnest wish and " prayer that you may be more and more con-

" firmed in the belief of those precious truths,
" that, feeling the comfort of them in your own
" soul, you may boldly, faithfully, and success-
" fully preach them to others.

" The question proposed in your letter,
" How happens it, that the persuasion or be-
" lief of the doctrines of the gospel makes so
" little impression, and is accompanied with so
" little emotion or desire? is a question that has
" often occurred to myself, in respect to which
" I have equal, if not greater cause, to make
" the same complaint that you do. I wish you
" had added some resolution of the question.
" In my own case, I have attributed the want
" of those lively feelings you speak of, very
" much to the weakness of faith; and I think
" there is little doubt, were our faith of divine
" truth stronger, more like what the apostle
" calls " the substance of things hoped for, and
" the evidence of things not seen," the im-
" pressions upon our minds would be more
" powerful, and the emotions of love, gratitude,
" desire, &c. proportionally greater. In some
" happy moments, when the objects of faith
" appear with the brightest evidence to our
" minds, the devout affections of the soul are
" most powerfully awakened. But I do not
" suppose that we are to judge of the strength
" of our faith, altogether by the warmth of our

" affections. It cannot be expected, in the pre-
" sent state of human nature, that this warmth
" of affection can be always alike. It is partly
" excited by novelty and other circumstances,
" and must of course abate when these circum-
" stances cease to operate. You love a friend
" whom you have found worthy of esteem,
" with a warm and steady affection. But the
" first transports of affection quickly subside,
" and your friendship gradually ripens into a
" calm and settled regard. You cannot always
" be thinking of your friend, for the mind con-
" tinually bent upon one object loses its tone;
" but supposing your friend in distress or in
" danger, or supposing you meet him after a
" long absence, your affections are immediately
" stirred, and you find the principle of friend-
" ship, though less sensible in its operations,
" greatly confirmed or increased by length of
" time. I leave the application to yourself,
" only observing, that as the certain fruit of
" faith is love, so the best evidence of love is
" obedience, and that practical habits of self-de-
" nial, and a readiness to take up the cross,
" when worldly interest and duty come in com-
" petition, is a surer mark of love to Christ, and
" of a firm belief of the gospel, than the great-
" est ardours of affection when these are want-
" ing.

" The author's names you mention as having " been useful to you, are men whose writings I " highly esteem. I would recommend another " of the same stamp, a man of great genius, as " well as piety, from whom I have received much " profit, as well as delight; I mean Dr Watts. " His sermons, and other prose works, if you " have not read them, are well worth your per- " usal. Dr Watts was a real poet, and his style " possesses all the fire and animation of poetry. " I thank you kindly for sending me Cowper's " poems; they are truly excellent, and this is a " kind of reading in which, with you, I find great " pleasure. I hope you will allow me to keep " them a little while, and I promise you they " shall be returned carefully. I agree perfectly " with you in your judgment of public affairs. " It is an eventful period, but we know who is " at the helm, and that it shall be well with the " righteous, happen what may. I look upon " the French as under the most awful infatua- " tion, and hope the measures adopted by go- " vernment will give a timely check to their " wild ambition."

How far Mr Stewart acquiesced in his friend's observations, will appear from what he wrote in reply.

Moulin Manse, 17*th May* 1793.

" Your answer to my complaints of insensibi-
" lity to divine truths, and the illustration you
" give, seem perfectly just. Steady resolute
" obedience, or the conformity of the will to the
" will of God, is no doubt the most unequivo-
" cal, and therefore the most satisfactory evi-
" dence of faith and of love. But still we are
" told, that " with the *heart* man believeth."
" This expression has always struck me strong-
" ly, as marking the difference between *specu-*
" *lative belief*, and *operative* (to apply a new
" epithet) *faith*, that faith which *worketh*,
" whether by love, or by any other passion
" which it awakens and puts in motion. Giving
" an assent to the truth of facts or of declara-
" tion, is what I would call belief; feeling one's
" own interest in the truth of those facts or de-
" clarations, is what I would generally under-
" stand by faith. I remember Mr Robert Wal-
" ker, in one of his sermons, maintains, that the
" reason why men are so little impressed with
" the important truths of the gospel, is, that
" they do not seriously believe them. This
" seems to imply, that belief is necessarily ac-
" companied with corresponding emotions, de-
" sires, resolutions, endeavours, and action. For
" my own part, I should think that a man may

" be thoroughly convinced, may fully believe
" certain truths, and yet may have no percep-
" tible emotions or desires corresponding to the
" belief. Indeed, I cannot help considering my-
" self as an instance in point. I think I believe,
" as confidently as I believe my senses, many
" scriptural doctrines, even those that seem at
" first sight most repugnant to reason, and
" which once I thought inadmissible; and yet
" it is wonderful to myself how little I am af-
" fected by them. Perhaps, however, this same
" interval of insensibility may have its use.
" When those emotions and desires of which I
" now find the want, come to be felt, I may be
" the more strongly convinced, that however
" belief might be supposed to be a natural act
" of the understanding, yet faith, in its full ex-
" tent, must be confessed to be the immediate
" gift of God *."

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* A case such as Mr Stewart here describes, is by no means uncommon; for, how often is the understanding passive to doctrines, by which the heart remains unimpressed, and an assent is yielded to every truth relating to Christianity, accompanied with no sensible power over the affections. There are many who exclude no doctrine of Revelation from their creed, and who refuse to no statement of Christianity a professed assent, who, nevertheless, seem to possess few

If Mr Stewart's distinction between *faith* and *belief* be admitted, there is a great propriety in

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of its serious consolations. Of these, some never seem to advert to their own deficiency in the comforts of religion, and count anxiety concerning it no favourable indication of a man's understanding; while others, whose attention has been called to the subject, by a powerful feeling of uneasiness and defect, among other means for relief, are sometimes led, like Mr Stewart, to seek counsel from more experienced friends. Without professing to give a formal solution of the question proposed, Mr Black remarks on it with his usual seriousness and reference to holy living. Mr Stewart suggests a distinction between *belief* and *faith*, which leaves the truth believed as cold and abstract from comfortable feeling as before. And in this state of mind, such a view as that unfolded in a well-known book on Sanctification, appears well adapted to excite dormant emotions, and call the livelier feelings of the heart into action, and by means of the appropriating exercises of faith, to lead more directly to the attainment of joy and peace in believing. For, by proposing to the soul, convinced of its own need, and owning the record to be true which God hath given of his Son, an immediate consent of the will to receive Christ on the divine grant, for present and everlasting salvation, with full recumbency on him, the principle of belief which lay passive in the understanding, is brought into contact with its object in the affections; and if the receiving act of faith take place, in the persuasion that Christ and all his saving benefits are freely given unto us of God, then, concluding them to be ours, we can hardly fail to rejoice, and may warrantably rejoice, in the begun confidence of salvation,

pressing on a multitude of believers the apostle's question, " Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" When " the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ" is given, and when " the light shineth out of darkness, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ," faith is no more a cold, lifeless, heartless thing. The glory of its object rouses attention, and awakens love, and the believer walks in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, as Mr Stewart afterwards happily knew by experience. Agreeably to his request, Mr Black sent him a parcel of his sermons for perusal, requesting at the same time, his judgment on their structure and contents. Without giving the whole of his

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assuring ourselves that all we need is in Christ, and that with him God has given us all things in grant, and will in due time enlarge the coasts of our possession.

Belief and comfort unite in such a frame of mind; for thus may union with Christ, the fountain of consolation, be attained. And nothing seems more accordant with the precepts, promises, and examples of the New Testament, relative to faith, than thus to count the Saviour worthy of our immediate gratitude, love, and trust, simply confiding, and nothing doubting his power and willingness to save and sanctify us through faith in his name. This trust the Holy Spirit will ratify and seal, Eph. i. 13. Gal. iii. 2.

criticisms, we shall only insert his animadversions on " a single point, which," says he, " I " am not prepared to disprove, but to which I " do not fully assent. It is stated, that " a man " may be perfectly orthodox in his creed, and " yet remain a stranger to purity of heart," &c. " I have been accustomed to think, that there " are doctrines revealed in Scripture, to which " " the natural man" cannot even give a rational " assent, that is, believe to be true in the com- " mon sense of the expression. In other words, " is it not as impossible for a man to believe " certain doctrines of revelation, without hav- " ing his mind enlightened by the Holy Spirit, " as it is to obey the precepts of the gospel, " without having his heart renewed by the " Holy Spirit? Is not this opinion supported " by Matth. xvi. 17. 1 Cor. xii. 3. John v. 1, 4, 5. " Eph. i. 18. and especially 1 Cor. ii. 14.?"

Mr Black wrote the following, in answer to the criticism of his friend:—

St Madoes, 23d September 1793.

" I cannot soon repay what I owe you for " your last long and affectionate letter. The " critique you have been so good as send along " with the discourses, I highly value. It is " favourable indeed, much beyond the merit of

" the discourses, but as I know my friend is far
" above flattery, so I can make some allow-
" ance for the favourable eye with which the
" most candid and impartial must always per-
" use the performance of one whom they love
" and esteem. But I assure you, my dear friend,
" your approbation, and the coincidence of sen-
" timent which this approbation necessarily
" supposes, are on many accounts to me highly
" gratifying. It is a small matter to be judged
" of man's judgment, nor does our faith stand
" in the wisdom or opinion of men, but in the
" power of God; at the same time there is
" something truly delightful in finding, that
" others who are seeking after the knowledge
" of divine truth, entertain the same sentiments
" with yourself on the great and leading articles
" of the Christian faith. I am happy to find
" I have expressed myself on these fundamental
" points in such a manner as to meet in general
" your full assent and approbation.

" The remark you make on the expression,
" " a man may be perfectly orthodox in his creed,
" and yet a stranger to purity of heart and life,"
" has frequently occurred to myself; nor am I
" quite certain but you are in the right. On
" the one hand, it is clear that there are certain
" doctrines which appear to the natural mind
" as foolishness, and which no man can receive,

" but by the Holy Ghost. On the other hand, " it is equally evident from the word of God, " that there is such a thing as a dead faith, and " that a man may talk and write learnedly on " the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, who is far " from feeling their influence, or living under " their power. I do not say that such a one " truly understands or believes the gospel, but " at least he thinks he does so; he has a con- " nected system in his head, and can reason and " argue on the most important points of scrip- " ture doctrines, with as much clearness and " precision as the most established believers. " Perhaps some error lies at the bottom, which " only the great Searcher of hearts can discover. " Faith is the gift of God, nor can all the read- " ing and reasoning in the world impart it " without divine influence. It is the light of " the gospel shining into the mind. Read " 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2. and, if you please, give me " your opinion."

This letter also contained Mr Black's congratulations on his friend's marriage, which had taken place a few weeks prior to his writing. Miss Louisa M'Pherson, the object of his choice, was a young lady, who, he informs his correspondent, " besides the more common qualifica- " tions of good dispositions, economical skill,

" &c. possesses the more uncommon recommen-
" dation of a heart deeply impressed with a ge-
" nuine sense of religion. Mutual esteem, ap-
" probation of friends, and reasonable, though
" moderate prospects with regard to worldly for-
" tune, all concur to brighten the prospect of
" our expected union. In these circumstances
" I feel a pleasure in communicating my hap-
" ness to my kind sympathising friends, and
" συγχαιρέτε μοι is the only language in which I am
" disposed at present to address them."

But whatever accession to happiness his marriage had afforded, and whatever he had gained in point of correct principle in his researches after truth, his heart still remained in a very unsatisfied state, as the following plaintive letter to Mr Black will tell.

" *Moulin, 27th April* 1794.

" I remember I said in one of my letters a
" considerable while ago, that in writing to so
" intimate a friend as I wished to reckon you,
" I might probably speak sometimes of my own
" tenderest concerns, and perhaps use the lan-
" guage of complaint. I had this strongly in
" my mind when I solicited your correspon-
" dence. I have different times wished to do
" it, to communicate to you my apprehensions

" and regrets, and reasons for being dissatisfied
" with myself, and I have as often been hinder-
" ed by a shyness, natural enough perhaps, but
" which has deprived me of many advantages.
" For some weeks past, in particular, I have at-
" tempted repeatedly to unburden myself, and
" request your friendly counsel.

" You can hardly imagine what a severe re-
" buke, though you did not mean it as such,
" was conveyed in a passage of your last letter,
" where you say, that " when you observe my
" growing acquaintance with divine truth, you
" wish to be provoked to a holy emulation in
" the same glorious path." A wretched pattern
" indeed should I be to any one that wished to
" make progress in that path! Yet, if I have
" made any attainment at all in religion, I be-
" lieve it is in knowledge, which I hope is more
" correct than it once was, in what respects the
" distinguishing and essential truths of Christia-
" nity. I was more interested than you might
" suppose in the question I once proposed to
" you, Whether a firm belief of religious truths
" was not to be reckoned the work of the Holy
" Spirit, as well as the faithful performance of
" religious duties? I was anxious to have this
" question answered in the affirmative, for it
" seemed to be the only evidence I could bring

" of my being at all under the guidance of the " Divine Spirit. Yet I was afraid, and am so " still, that this evidence is not conclusive. I " had read in scripture of a *dead faith;* you " stated the same thing in your discourses, and " I had undeniable experience in myself of its " reality; for if ever *faith* could be called *dead,* " mine deserved that name. As to any fruits of " the Spirit, either in the desires of my heart, " or in active exertions in my divine Master's " service, I was as barren as the fig-tree in the " parable, which only cumbered the ground. " One of the most melancholy circumstances in " my case, and the most unequivocal mark of " my being in a state of spiritual decay, is, that " the spirit of prayer, if ever I possessed it, has " quite left me. I cannot rouse myself to offer " any petition with earnestness, and indeed I " hardly know what I ought to pray for. A " listlessness and indolence hang about me, " and withstand every attempt at exertion of " any kind. I find my books a great snare to " me. I would seek no other employment, the " whole day long, than poring over some classi- " cal, or philosophical, or historical, or statistical " composition. I generally find the perusal of " a religious book, unless it contain something " metaphysical or critical, insipid and tiresome. " If it is of a pathetic and impressive kind, I

" find it extremely irksome, for I am perfectly
" sensible how I ought to be affected by what I
" read, but at the same time conscious that I am
" not affected in that manner, and this makes
" me uneasy.

" Though I am convinced that my case is a
" dangerous one, I cannot say that it gives me
" much real alarm; but I believe the cause
" of that is the very languor and insensibility
" which constitute my disease. I am in hopes
" that I may yet be delivered from it myself,
" but I lament its continuance on account of
" my people, for I think that in my present
" frame, my ministrations can be of little ser-
" vice to them. Many pathetic addresses do I
" meet with in Doddridge's writings, which I
" dare not use in my own discourses. They are
" so remote from what my own dull feelings in
" their present state would suggest, that I can-
" not adopt nor utter them.

" I have not occasion to go far to seek a re-
" medy for my complaints. I have the holy
" scriptures at hand, which contain the words
" of eternal life, and which testify of the Lord
" Jesus. Nor am I without the assistance of
" pious and judicious writers. But the diffi-
" culty is, to bring myself to quit my ordi-
" nary reading, and apply to these with ear-
" nestness and diligence. I must prescribe

" to myself a fixed regimen in reading, for I
" find that intemperance in that respect is at
" present the most dangerous to me of any.
" Let me, however, request of you, my dear
" friend, to give me your advice and assistance
" as soon as you conveniently can, and let me
" especially have your prayers, that the Dresser
" of the vineyard may be pleased to dress about
" this fig-tree, that it may yet bear some fruit,
" to the praise of his skill and his goodness."

As all solicitude about eternal things is by some thought to proceed from a weak understanding, declining health, or disappointed hopes, it may be here observed, that Mr Stewart's heaviness of spirit could be accounted for on no such grounds; for, instead of disappointment, he had abundance of respect from all who knew him, with as large a portion of domestic happiness as usually falls to the lot of man. As to health, he was at this time in the prime of a solid and unbroken constitution, and he was so far from having any constitutional tendency to what is called lowness of spirits, that his cheerfulness tended to an extreme; and when he was a much older man, he complained of it as a defect in his character, that he possessed too little gravity;—and not only had he a vigorous mind, but he kept it in vigorous exercise, for, besides the utmost diligence in parochial duties, he was

then engaged in perfecting himself in the Gaelic, into which he had rendered Watt's "Preservative from vice and folly," for the benefit of his flock. This was his first essay in translating into Gaelic, though a little before this he had surprised Dr D. Smith, one of the first Gaelic scholars of his time, with an elaborate theory of the Gaelic noun. "I am forced," said that veteran scholar, "to admire your scheme of it, "though it be different from my own, which "will as soon as possible be submitted to your "inspection, along with a draught of the Gaelic "verb." Such deference shewn to a young man in his first essay in a language long cultivated by Dr Smith, gives a high idea of Mr Stewart's active researches and proficiency.

In such studies, diversified with the best social endearments, and relieved occasionally with music, (in the theory and practice of which he was no mean proficient), with the esteem of many friends, and every expectation he could have reasonably indulged with respect to this world, fully realized, Mr Stewart found himself not happy. On the principles of the world, his infelicity is inexplicable, but easily accounted for on religious views. His God had begun a good work in him, and as it advanced, a dissatisfaction with objects of an opposite character, and a distaste for things congenial to the natural mind, was

the necessary result. It is the property of grace, that it works to the mortification of what is contrary; and the least true influence of it in the heart, though perhaps not in force to subjugate the whole soul, will render a man incapable of enjoyment in the pursuit of vanity. There may be resistance or flight, but the heart carries along with it the seed of life, which, as it expands, chokes the weeds of corruption, and at length spreads its own heavenly savour through the soul. Mr Stewart was already under a process of spiritual renovation, which, if we may use the figure, issued in *death* to the world. He had of the Spirit enough to make him disrelish things earthly, but not enough to furnish him with prevailing peace and joy.

In the above letter, we notice an instance of Mr Stewart's honesty in not appearing more skilful in the word than he really was; where he mentions his not delivering to his people the pathetic addresses of other divines, because they were remote from his own actual feelings. It was a question with that profound thinker Cecil, how far a minister should go beyond his own experience in preaching the gospel to others. For ministers may be regarded in the light of witnesses; and as one remarks, "those are very im-"properly called witnesses of the truth of any "thing, who only declare they are very much

" of opinion that such a thing is true. Those " only are proper witnesses, who can, and do " testify, that they have seen the truth of the " thing they assert." " We speak that we do " know, and testify that we have seen," not " merely what others have known, and what " others have seen." And any testimony we bear beyond actual experience, in representing the internal workings of true religion, though it may be a testimony for truth, is not a testimony for known truth.

It may be said, were every minister to tell no more than he has himself proved on experience, our pulpit discourses would become tame, and wonderfully limited in range of topic, and in point of interest. It may be so; but if our poverty is positive, and our apparent riches nothing but the parade of borrowed affluence, it were at least more beneficial to ourselves to appear what we are, than to obtain credit for what we are not, a credit too, the facility of which prevents industry, and is commonly ruinous to proficiency in the end.

That an honest testimony to what we know and feel, would have a better influence on our own minds, than to outrun experience, and venture on some things beyond conviction, seems unquestionable; and it may be illustrated in the cases of Mr Stewart and a friend of his in the minis-

try, who not long after wrote him, " There are " a thousand warm and affectionately pious ex- " pressions which I have used in the pulpit to " my people, which yet I am well aware I have " never felt the full power and force of on my " own heart, but I consider it my duty to use " them, and more, I use them with pleasure."

Now, here are two ministers officially guiding souls to eternity, the one fears the least deviation from the line of experience, the other expatiates at large on untried ground, and fears nothing. Which of them acts the wiser part? Let the result determine. Mr Stewart soon gained great progress, while there is no evidence to shew that the other did not remain stationary.

One may be eloquent and full of fine imaginations in displaying the facts, illustrating the evidences, or in enforcing the duties of Christianity. But when it comes to the experimental part *, the power of faith, the workings of the

* We need hardly remark, that to exclude experimental preaching were to render the ministry of the word meagre and unfit for edifying the body of Christ; and nothing can be more void of interest and utility, than the dry argumentative discourses of those who are perpetually proving what no man doubts; vindicating revelation without producing or applying what is revealed; and enforcing Christianity without shewing what are the motives, privileges, and hopes of a Christian man.

Spirit, the joys of salvation, and the gracious frame of a sanctified heart, let him beware of testifying what he hath not seen nor felt, otherwise he will expose himself to just censure, when he descends from the pulpit quite another character than he personated in it,—a miserable inconsistency too often exhibited! And though he may excuse himself on the ground that it is more edifying to his advanced hearers, not to keep back truths that lie beyond his own experience, but may only be equal to the measure of theirs, yet it can hardly profit his people to deal insincerely with the word; and if he lack experience, let him, like the subject of this memoir, be sensible of his want, and not rest from the faithful use of means, until it be abundantly supplied. Unproved armour, however shining, is not profitable in the conflict we wage; and thus accoutred, we shall not be formidable to the enemy.

How diligently Mr Stewart used accessible means, and how conscientiously he adjusted the strain of his preaching to the discoveries he made in the knowledge of the truth, neither going before light, nor declining to follow its progress, will appear from the following statement of his own narrative;—which, however, refers to a period of his ministry prior to the date of the last inserted letters.

"The writings of pious men, which were put

" into my hands by one or another Christian
" friend, were made the means of bringing me
" acquainted with the truths of the gospel.
" Among these I may mention the works of
" the Rev. John Newton and Thomas Scott,
" as eminently useful to me. I was slow in re-
" ceiving and embracing the doctrines main-
" tained by these writers. By degrees, how-
" ever, I was persuaded they were agreeable to
" scripture, and that no doubt they must be ad-
" mitted as true. I therefore durst not preach
" any thing which I conceived to be directly
" contrary to these doctrines, but I brought them
" forward rarely, incorrectly, and with auk-
" ward hesitation. The trumpet was sounded,
" but it gave an " uncertain sound." My
" preaching now consisted of a mixed kind of
" doctrine. I taught that human nature is
" corrupt, and requires to be purified,—that
" righteousness cannot come by the law,—that
" we cannot be justified in the sight of God by
" our own works,—that we can be justified only
" by the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us,
" and received by faith. But in explaining
" the nature of saving faith, I conceived it as
" including many of its effects; not only a cor-
" dial acceptance of the plan of redemption by
" a Mediator, but also ardent gratitude to God
" our Saviour, on account of that redemption,

" devotedness to his service, good-will to our bre-
" thren of mankind; in a word, every pious and
" benevolent disposition of heart. I thought and
" taught, that on our possessing *this* faith, we
" should, in consideration of it, have an interest
" in the redemption purchased by Christ, and con-
" sequently be accepted by God, and rewarded
" as righteous persons. Thus, by a short circuit,
" I arrived at the same point from which I had
" set out, still resting a sinner's acceptance with
" God, on the conformity of his will to the
" divine law, or, in other words, on the merit
" of his good dispositions, and thus endeavour-
" ing to establish a human righteousness under
" the name of faith in Jesus Christ. It was
" plain, indeed, that this conformity of the will
" to the divine law, could be but imperfect in
" this life; yet, imperfect as it was, it must, in
" my apprehension, be the ground of our justifi-
" cation and acceptance with God. Here I stum-
" bled on that stumbling-stone of *sincere obe-*
" *dience*, in substance, at least, if not in so many
" words, imagining, like many in whose writ-
" ings I have since met with that opinion, that
" the great favour procured to men by Christ's
" sufferings and mediation, was a relaxation of
" the divine law, and that an imperfect obe-
" dience, dignified with the name of sincere, was
" all that was now required. This was " another

" gospel, which never could be owned by God
" as the gospel of his Son, nor accompanied by
" that sanctifying power which belongs exclu-
" sively to the truth. If it set any of my people
" on thinking, it only bewildered and misled
" them. They remained, as before, unenlighten-
" ed and unchanged."

Mr Black was not unmindful of the case so feelingly described in the letter last inserted.

" My dear Sir, *St Madocs*, 10*th June* 1794.

" Had I not been particularly engaged at
" the time when I received your last letter,
" I should not have allowed it to remain so
" long unanswered. It called forth my sin-
" cerest sympathy, and demanded an early
" acknowledgement. The case described in it
" has been so often my own case, that I confess
" to you I felt some kind of satisfaction in
" hearing the same complaints made by a Chris-
" tian friend, which, alas! I have had but too,
" too much occasion to make myself. Indolence,
" especially in the concerns of religion, I think
" my constitutional sin. I have seldom been
" able to maintain liveliness in devotion for any
" length of time; and though I could never lay
" aside secret prayer, but have always been
" kept to it from a sense of duty, yet, alas! God

" knows what poor, fruitless, formal services " have often been presented at his footstool. " This uncomfortable frame of mind I have " experienced particularly in the season of " worldly prosperity, when outward circum- " stances were going well with me, which " makes me almost afraid of those successes " which are naturally so flattering to our " wishes, and so eagerly desired by many.

" I mention these things relating to myself, " not with any view to soothe or satisfy your " mind in its present declining state, (for it is " the office of Christian friendship rather to " *provoke* unto love and to good works), but " merely to shew, what I know the great enemy " of souls will be ready to deny, that your case, " however melancholy, is not singular, nor in- " compatible with former experience of the " grace of God. You are dissatisfied with your- " self. You bemoan your present circumstances, " not perhaps with all the feeling you think " the case requires, for the want of proper feel- " ing is the very distemper under which you " groan, and the removal of that insensibility " would prove your cure; but at least you must " allow it is matter of *sincere* regret, nor could " any worldly object inspire you with such joy " as the returning light of God's countenance. " Now, my dear Sir, let me ask you, who or

" what has taught you the difference between
" the presence and absence of God in the duties
" of devotion? Was there not a time, when, if
" you prayed at all, your conscience was satis-
" fied with the mere outward performance of
" duty, without looking farther, and when the
" language of Christians respecting their frames,
" and fears, and backslidings, and declensions,
" sounded somewhat strange in your ears?
" Bless God if it is otherwise now. Guard against
" desponding; continue to wait on God, praying
" as the Psalmist does, Psal. cxlii. 7.

" In the close of your letter, you suggest
" very suitable means for recovery from your
" present uncomfortable situation. Doubtless,
" faith and prayer are the natural and proper
" remedies. One thing allow me to hint, which
" I have found useful to myself; I mean, to set
" apart some time extraordinary for devotion,
" more or less, as your circumstances will allow.
" You may possibly feel considerable reluc-
" tance to this proposal. The indisposition to
" prayer you complain of, may appear an in-
" vincible objection. But do try,—persevere in
" humble importunity, and with a believing
" dependence on the intercession of our great
" High-Priest, and it shall not be in vain.
" You seem to think that your present languid
" frame will lessen your usefulness among your

" people. I am of a different opinion. I be-
" lieve, in the issue, it will greatly increase it.

" It is necessary, my dear Sir, that we should
" know experimentally the bitter as well as the
" sweets of religion, that we may be able to
" speak a word in season to the weary soul; and
" when the Lord is pleased to return your for-
" mer comforts, you will have cause to bless
" him for all the way by which he hath led
" you."

The general strain of this letter is truly excellent, conveying both sympathy and direction; and Mr Stewart needed both; though, perhaps, there was less need of arguments to reconcile him to his situation, than of exhortation to look for a higher dispensation of the Spirit, and to press towards it in faithful hope.

That dispensation, however, was at hand. His mind, for a while, had been like an Arctic day, at that period when the sun approaches the horizon, without surmounting it. He enjoyed a partial light with little warmth, and without any enlivening discoveries of the Author and Finisher of faith; but it was not long until he could say, " mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Various secondary causes had co-operated, through the disposition of the Spirit, to form his mind into deeper seriousness and concern; and among

these causes, his own narrative enumerates the following.

" The biographical sketches in the Evangeli-
" cal Magazine, were principal means of im-
" pressing my heart, of opening my eyes to
" perceive the truth, of exciting a love to godli-
" ness, and a desire after usefulness. The power
" of divine grace appeared illustrious in the
" composure, the joy, the triumph, with which
" many pious Christians left the world. I saw
" their triumphant hope supported, not by a
" complacent reflection on a well-spent life, but
" by a confidence in the unmerited love of
" Christ, and in his power and willingness to
" save even the chief of sinners. I was particu-
" larly struck with the account of ministers who
" had laboured with much diligence and success,
" and had died at an early period of life, full of
" good fruits; while I, who had already lived
" longer, and been longer in the ministry than
" they, could not say that I had taken any pains
" with my people, nor that I had been the
" means of reclaiming one sinner from the
" error of his way, or of saving one soul from
" death. The conversation and example of
" some persons of a truly spiritual mind, to
" whose acquaintance I was admitted, and who
" exhibited to my view what I found only de-
" scribed in written memoirs, conduced much

" to impress on my mind the truths with which
" I was gradually becoming more acquainted.
" I cannot omit mentioning, in this connection,
" the blessing I enjoyed in the preaching, the
" prayers, and the conversation of that much-
" favoured servant of Christ, the Rev. Charles
" Simeon, of King's College, Cambridge. He
" was a man sent from God to me, was my
" guest for two days in June 1796, preached in
" my church, and left a savour of the things of
" God, which has remained with us ever since."

Indeed, from the latter circumstance, Mr Stewart always dated his own entrance into the fulness and freedom of a state of grace in Christ Jesus; and a visit apparently casual and undesigned on the part of Mr Simeon, constituted the most important era in Mr Stewart's mortal life.

That Mr Simeon's visit was connected with an actual change in Mr Stewart, his subsequent life, compared with the preceding part of it, furnished the most unequivocal evidence. But if it be inquired, What was the amount of the change? it belongs not to us to form an estimate. It is sufficient to observe, that from this time his heart *was enlarged*, as well as his understanding enlightened; and that he spoke the language *of faith*, and did *the works* that necessarily spring from it. That he was without the Spirit until then, we dare not affirm; but that

an extraordinary influence then rested on him, both of light and power, it were against the clearest testimonies to deny. For *henceforth* his faith grew exceedingly, his knowledge in divine things made him a master in Israel. He was conscious of a *newness of life*, with its spiritual concomitants of *feeling and desire*,—and whereas before, he spake of Christ doubtingly, and preached him with hesitation or unconcern, he now found, that to him to live was Christ; and that to fulfil his ministry, was to preach Christ, and him crucified,—as "the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation." To attempt to account for Mr Stewart's altered character,—altered, too, at a given time and place,—an alteration that shewed itself to be permanent and uniform as life itself,—to explain this phenomenon in the moral world, without having recourse to the communication of a supernatural principle, operating with power to the conversion of the heart, and formation of the new character, were to resort to the unphilosophical method of accounting for changes without assigning a *sufficient cause*. For without divine influence, there is nothing attending Mr Simeon's visit that will account for the circumstances connected with it.

The following letter was written by Mr Simeon on his return home, and may afford, to

those who have never seen that eminently useful servant of Christ, some idea of the singular spirit of grace dwelling in him, with which every feature seems animated, and every movement and action evidently characterized.

" My very, very dear Friend,

" Among the many rich mercies which God " vouchsafed to me, in my late excursion, I " cannot but consider the sweet interview which " I enjoyed with you as one of the greatest. " There is an unaccountable union of heart " with, or, if I may so express myself, an out- " going of the soul towards some persons, which " we feel instantaneously, and we know not " why. There is something that irresistibly " impresses the mind with affection, and dis- " poses one to communicate one's ideas with " freedom and familiarity; such I felt almost " the first instant I saw my dear friend at Mou- " lin. I hope it is an earnest of that everlast- " ing union which our souls shall enjoy in the " regions of light and love. Often have I re- " flected on the peculiar circumstances which, " contrary to my own intention, brought me to " stop under your hospitable roof. It had been " Mr H.'s purpose and my own to have been " with you on Friday to tea, and either have " stopped with you that night, or gone to Blair,

" as might appear expedient. Our horses were
" actually saddled and brought to the door, and
" we were going to mount. But I felt a very
" unusual languor and fatigue, by means of the
" long walk we had taken at Dunkeld; and on
" my proposing to abide there that night, Mr
" H. readily acquiesced. Even then we had
" no idea of spending the Sabbath at Moulin.
" Our great object was to get to Glasgow by a
" certain day; and though this was far from
" being our reason for accepting your invitation
" to return from Blair, yet the circumstance of
" our being somewhat advanced in our journey
" weighed a little in the scale, perhaps as much
" as one part in twenty. The circumstance of
" your having the sacrament, of our being able
" to enjoy the company of your other visitors,
" of there being no service at Blair, and of our
" having a longer intercourse with yourself,
" were our principal inducements to return to
" you. But had not so many circumstances
" concurred, it is more than probable we should
" have abode at Blair. It has often brought to
" my mind that expression of the Evangelist,
" " he *must needs* go through Samaria." Why
" so? It lay in his way, you will say, from
" Judea to Galilee; true, but how often had
" he taken a circuit, going through the towns
" and villages round about. But the Samaritan

" woman was there, and for her God designed
" an especial blessing. What thanks can we
" ever render to God for those turns in his pro-
" vidence, which at the time appear insignifi-
" cant, but afterwards are found to have been
" big with the most important consequences!
" It is our privilege to expect those invisible
" interpositions, if we commit our way to him;
" and every instance that comes to our notice
" should encourage us to acknowledge him in
" all our ways. I am exceedingly comforted,
" my dear brother, with the account which
" you give of your soul. O how desireable is
" it for all, but especially for ministers, to have
" their souls deeply and devoutly impressed!
" What is religion without this? What are
" duties without this? Alas! a dry, insipid,
" unsatisfying, unproductive form. I pray God
" that what you now experience may only be
" as the drop before the shower. Surely this is
" happiness, to taste the love of God, to find
" delight in his service, and to see that we are
" in a measure instrumental to the imparting of
" this happiness to others,—this, I say, is a feli-
" city which nothing but Heaven can exceed.
" Often have I implored this blessing upon your-
" self and upon your sister, (with whose un-
" affected piety my soul was much refreshed),
" and upon your whole family; and I hope,

" that to my dying hour, my prayers and " thanksgivings upon your account shall yet " ascend up before God. I hope, too, that you " will bear my unworthy name upon your heart, " whenever you get within the vail.

" The account you give me of the dear poor " woman rejoices my heart. How often does " God magnify the exceeding riches of his grace " towards objects whom the world looks upon " with contempt; and angels esteem it an ho- " nour to minister to those who have hardly the " necessaries of life! I admire this! I adore God " for it; it is to me a delightful proof of his " goodness, and of his all-sufficiency to make us " happy. Pray give my fervent love to her. If " I could, I should very cheerfully send her " something more substantial. I bless God for " Mrs S.'s recovery, and, with Christian respects " to her and your sister, remain yours," &c.

Immediately on his going away, Mr Stewart thus addressed his correspondent in Edinburgh.

" What thanks do I not owe you for having " directed my two late visitors to call at my " cottage, as I have thus had the honour and " blessing of " entertaining angels unexpect- " edly;" messengers of grace I must reckon " them, as their visit has been thus far blessed " to me, more than any outward dispensation

" of Providence that I have met with. They " were so kind as put up with such accommo- " dation as we could afford them, though our " house was a good deal out of order, on ac- " count of Mrs Stewart's illness, and spent two " nights with us. Mr Simeon gave us his " friendly assistance, on occasion of dispensing " the Lord's supper, and frankly preached two " discourses on the Sabbath, besides serving a " table in English. This was the whole of the " English service for that day. His sermons, " and the conversation and prayers, I have no " doubt, of both gentlemen, have indeed been " eminently blessed to me. Since I first en- " tered on my sacred office, I have not felt " such a lively season as the last week has " been. I had some private conversation, too, " with my kind friend Mr H. which proved " not a little edifying to me. I shall not fail " to return his visit when I go next to Edin- " burgh. When I have such friends as him " and you to see, with the prospect of being " introduced, perhaps, to Dr Buchanan, pos- " sibly to Dr Davidson, &c. I think it will " be incumbent on me to make my visits to " Edinburgh more frequent than they have " been hitherto. And I am sure I shall have " vastly more enjoyment in collecting spiritual " knowledge, and deriving vigour and anima-

" tion from the fountain of life, through the
" conversation and counsel of the servants of
" the Lord, than ever I found, or can find, in
" the conversation of all the Literati or Meta-
" physicians that your University contains.
" That I shall ever see Mr Simeon again in
" the flesh, is hardly probable. I hope, how-
" ever, he will not entirely forget me. It will
" be an encouragement to him to offer up a pe-
" tition sometimes, in behalf of me and my
" people, to be assured that his prayers have
" already been in part answered. In some
" duties to which I have been called these few
" days,—in conversing with two or three per-
" sons in my neighbourhood about their spiri-
" tual state,—in exhorting the surviving friends
" of those who have died of fevers,—and in pri-
" vate prayer, I have found a degree of freedom,
" ease, and alacrity, to which I was before a
" stranger. I mention these things that you
" may inform Mr Simeon of them, for his satis-
" faction, and that you may both join me in
" blessing the Lord, the giver of every good
" and perfect gift, for having visited me in
" mercy, and pray that I may receive yet more
" abundant supplies of his grace.

" I go to-day to visit a young man, whom
" his friends report to me as deranged. He
" used to be diligent in reading his Bible. It

" seems he was strongly affected in time of
" sermon, on our last sacrament day, and since
" that time he seeks retirement, reads much,
" sings Psalms, and sometimes bursts into tears,
" all which makes his family think him crazed.
" I long to see him, and examine into these
" promising symptoms. Perhaps a blessing
" may follow them to himself, and to some of
" his relatives. His mother is a serious woman,
" and used to take pains in instructing her chil-
" dren. A sister of this young man was
" awakened two or three years ago, and con-
" tinued some time in great trouble, and un-
" der distressing temptations, but was relieved,
" and continues a watchful and devout Chris-
" tian. Single instances of this kind are strik-
" ing and worthy of remark, especially in a dry
" and barren land, where we have few such.
" But perhaps, through the free and powerful
" grace of God, when we are dug about and
" dunged, we may yet flourish."

On comparing this letter with the one to Mr Black last inserted, he who can perceive no difference of mind and spirit in the writer, must be blind indeed. The one was full of complaint, and expressive of the most desponding frame, the other only talks of giving thanks, and blessing the Giver of every good and perfect gift, for having visited him in mercy.

Before this period, he seemed careless about fellowship with the brethren; but now his heart flowed out in love to them all, and he cannot but indulge himself in the prospect of seeing Dr B. or Dr D. and others in Edinburgh, of whose Christian character he had doubtless often heard, but never until now expressed a wish for nearer intercourse. The learned, whom he had so much admired, he could contentedly give up for the Christians he loved.

It was the remark of one of his friends, many years after this date, that "his affections were wonderfully improved on his change;" and it is very easy to account for the alteration; for the *love* of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, does not only correct and sanctify the natural tempers, and reduce their selfishness, but is in itself *a new affection*,—an affection, the property of which is, to unite in the bond of love all in whom it dwells.

It cannot escape observation, that Mr Stewart was no sooner set free from bondage, than he goes forth to seek the enlargement of other captives. In none of his former letters to Mr. Black, is there any mention of being conversant with the distressed in mind; but, being converted, he strengthens the brethren, and breathes the compassion of his Divine Master, who wills not mourners in Zion to sit comfortless.

The next letter to Mr Black, together with his answer, are interesting.

"I have little other news to tell, or subject "that I care to write about, except of the "Lord's goodness to me, and how he has been "multiplying his favours. Ever since the "blessed period of Mr Simeon's visit, my "thoughts have continued more steadily fixed "on divine things, and my communion with "God has been more lively by many degrees, "than I remember to have experienced before.

"The state of my mind has not indeed been "uniformly the same during this period. A "ride I took to Perth threw me a good deal "into vain company for two days, and brought "on a considerable languor and deadness, but "my kind Physician soon recovered me. At "other times, I felt myself dull and stupid for "nearly a whole day, and been revived in the "evening in a few minutes, while engaged in "secret prayer. My views of the Lord's good-"ness and mercy in the work of redemption "are clearer, at least they are much more im-"pressive, than they used to be. Indeed, they "quite confound and overpower me at times; "and yet these attributes must appear still "more glorious, when I shall get a distinct "sight of what I have not yet discovered, but

" very imperfectly, that is, my own unworthi-
" ness and guilt. Indeed, I have no more
" doubt of my own total unworthiness and de-
" pravity, than I have of God's holiness; but I
" am sure I shall one day be much more sen-
" sible of it than I am at present.

" I have enjoyed not a little of my divine Mas-
" ter's countenance and aid in my public duties
" of late, particularly while assisting at dispens-
" ing the sacrament at B—— and at K——. At
" the latter place, I met with one or two young
" communicants, whose state of mind, in respect
" of knowledge and apprehensions, seemed very
" promising. I conversed with one of them
" several times, found he understood and read
" English well. I gave him some of the Cheap
" Repository pamphlets, which he read to some
" of his neighbours with much pleasure. At
" B——, and afterwards at K——, I made an
" experiment which I never tried before, which
" was, to preach English from short notes or
" outlines, without having composed or writ-
" ten it out beforehand. I was anxious to try
" this, partly from a persuasion that even an
" English discourse might find some hearers
" who would understand and attend to it, if it
" were fitted to draw their attention; and part-
" ly from an emulation of Mr Simeon's energetic
" manner, in which I saw strikingly exempli-

" fied the superior effect of *preaching* above that " of reading, or even repeating, a written dis- " course. I did succeed far beyond my expec- " tation, for I found my thoughts and language " flow with more freedom and energy than in " the Gaelic, to which I had long been accus- " tomed. I consider this talent of preaching in " English, even in such measure as I seem al- " ready to possess it, as a mere gift newly be- " stowed on me, for I never had the least prac- " tice in speaking either in clubs or in church- " courts.

" I have just got from Edinburgh, Edwards " on Religious Affections; a book from which " I hope to reap considerable benefit. Do, my " dear friend, pray with me, and for me, that I " may be fed and nourished with the sincere " milk of the word, that I may grow thereby " in grace, and in the knowledge of our com- " mon Lord."

From Mr Black.

" I cannot express the heartfelt joy which I " have received from your two last letters. I " desire to join with you in giving all the praise " to Him, to whom alone it is due, who hath " shewed you the power of his works, and what

" great things he can and will do for those that
" hope in his mercy.

" Indeed, the more I think upon the means
" of your present revival, the more I am filled
" with astonishment at the methods of the
" Lord's dealing with his people. Mr Simeon's
" visit to Scotland was altogether unexpected.
" He has told me, that till he saw Dr Buchanan,
" he had no more idea of coming to Scotland,
" than of going to the East or West Indies.
" His calling at Moulin was equally unlooked
" for. The letter which introduced him, was
" quite a random thought that occurred to me,
" I cannot tell why or how. Upon what tri-
" vial circumstances do many of the most impor-
" tant events of our lives turn! Two strangers
" from a distance must be sent to Moulin at a
" season of peculiar solemnity, to become the
" instruments of good to your soul, and through
" you to the souls of many.

" O my dear Sir, " magnify the Lord with
" me, and let us exalt his name together."
" He " is excellent in counsel, and wonderful
" in working;" and your experience is now add-
" ed to that of thousands, who can declare, that
" verily there is a God that heareth prayer.

" I rejoice to learn that this lively comfort-
" able frame of mind still remains, and that it
" is attended with renewed alacrity in your

" public work. Long may it continue so, for " your own comfort, and the benefit of your " people! But changes, inward as well as out- " ward, you must expect to meet,—with many " a dark and rugged step. But, O! what a privi- " lege is it to know where relief is to be found; " to know experimentally the power and grace " of our Almighty Physician, and under a " daily, deep conviction of our guilt and help- " lessness, to be committing our souls, our fa- " milies, our flocks, our every concern, into *his* " faithful hands, who careth for us. I have " great cause to lament a prevailing deadness " and languor of spirit in secret devotion, and " cannot say but I was considerably moved, " when I read of the happy change which had " taken place with you in this respect. O pray " for me, my dear friend, that I may be visit- " ed as you have been, with the quickening in- " fluence of divine grace, that my views of the " glory of God, displayed in the work of re- " demption, may be more enlarged, and my im- " pressions of divine truth more deep, lively, " and abiding."

How much Mr Black rejoiced in the happiness of his friend, appears also from his diary, under the date of Oct. 9. 1796.

" *Oct.* 9. 1796.—Greatly comforted of late

" with accounts from my friend and fellow-
" labourer Mr Stewart of Moulin, whose soul
" has been wonderfully quickened, and much
" refreshed by a visit from Mr Simeon of Cam-
" bridge, whom I was led in a very providen-
" tial manner to introduce to Mr Stewart's ac-
" quaintance. It has proved like the beginning
" of a new life to him, and I trust the blessed
" effects of it will be experienced by his people
" as well as by himself. Indeed, this seems in
" some measure to be already the case. Bless-
" ed be God for this token of his goodness, this
" fresh evidence of the power of his grace."

Whatever might be the opinion of others with respect to the reality and the nature of the change he had experienced, he himself was at no loss as to its character, as appears from an extract from his next letter to Mr Black.

" The sentiments I have felt since Mr Si-
" meon's visit, you, and I believe Mrs Black,
" have been pleased to call a *revival.* I am not
" sure but an expression of my sister's, or of
" my own, might have suggested the word.
" The word, however, does not strictly apply:
" It was no *revival.* I never was alive till
" then. I think, however, I was in a state of
" preparation. I was gradually acquiring a

" knowledge of divine truth. It was given " me to *see* that such truths were contained in " the scriptures, but I did not *feel* them. In- " deed, I yet feel them but very imperfectly. " I know nothing to which I can so fitly com- " pare myself as to Ezekiel's dry bones, when " they were covered with flesh and skin, but " were without life or sensation. It was re- " served for Mr Simeon to be the man who " should be appointed to prophesy to the wind, " and say, " Come from the four winds, O " breath, and breathe upon this dead body, that " it may live." "

We have already stated, that no sooner was Mr Stewart converted, than he essayed to join himself to the brethren; while, towards his former associates, and early friends, he seems to have experienced much of that feeling, in which the apostle of the Gentiles made this protestation of his concern for the conversion of his countrymen the Jews,—" I say the truth in " Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing " me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have " great heaviness and continual sorrow in my " heart. For I could wish that myself were " accursed from Christ for my brethren, my " kinsmen according to the flesh," Rom. ix. 1, 2, 3.; and, " Brethren, my heart's desire and

" prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be " saved," Rom. x. 1.

Under the influence of this spirit, he first addressed himself to a clergyman of taste, talents, and literary acquirements similar to his own, with whom he had been long in habits of close intimacy and correspondence, and whom he now wished to introduce to the knowledge of evangelical truth. His friend in reply stated, with great good humour,—That he had never in his life been a reprobate;—that he had been able to behave with moral decency and propriety, in many trying situations, where many would have yielded and fallen, without the good principles he had imbibed from the early affectionate lessons of a worthy father, attributing his good behaviour to the principles of morality and piety he had imbibed in his early youth, at the same time confessing he had gained little in the way of that true believing love, which makes every thing delightful;—that though he never had felt any remarkable enthusiasm in the cause of piety and religion, he had never been a deserter or betrayer of that cause;—and that, though he was not reckoned one of the godly, yet he never could join with many even of his brethren, whom he had seen ridiculing and laughing at the over-righteous, as they termed them, having always had too poor an opinion of himself, or rather that

doubt of himself, that he could respect another's sentiments, though very different from his own, because he never was such a complete believer, as to think himself in possession of the only truth.

Mr Stewart renewed his benevolent efforts to impress the mind of his friend, and wrote the following in reply, in which he attempts what is in general so difficult,—to bring the unenlightened mind to a sense of its ignorance, and a conviction that there is something in religion it has not yet learned.

" *Moulin, May* 30. 1797.

" Your letter found me, t'other day, at D. " where I preached by appointment of pres- " bytery. You may not readily give me cre- " dit, though I tell you, how much I was gra- " tified with the perusal of it. You reckoned " it but " poor confused stuff." I easily dis- " tinguished all that would have that appear- " ance to you; but I distinguished also some " bright luminous rays, not of genius, not of " fancy, but of something which our puritani- " cal forefathers would probably have called " grace; in short, some sentiments, of which, if " I am not mistaken, it may be affirmed, that " " flesh and blood have not revealed them to " you, but our Father who is in heaven."— " Why, you must know that, among other new

" acquisitions, I seem to have got a new way
" of judging of people's minds. I have learnt
" this, or rather have begun to learn it, by read-
" ing the history of others, but more by at-
" tending to the progress of my own sentiments.
" I hardly remember that ever I was, any more
" than you, a determined opposer of any doc-
" trines which *I knew* to be contained in scrip-
" ture; but I am now perfectly sensible that I
" was really *ignorant* of some of the most es-
" sential and peculiar doctrines of Christianity,
" and this not only when I was a student, but
" many years after I had become a teacher of
" others. The discovery of my ignorance was just
" the first step towards having it corrected. Now,
" I am strongly of opinion that you, my dear
" friend, are in the same way of making the
" same discovery concerning yourself. I am a-
" ware that you may reckon this, at first, rather
" an odd assertion; and indeed, my dear friend,
" it is perhaps but the first of several assertions,
" by which your candour and forbearance with
" me may be put to the proof. As to the im-
" putation of ignorance, one in your situation
" may be supposed to reply, 'Ignorant of the
" gospel! pardon me, my dear Sir; I have not
" been so long conversant with the best writers,
" and ablest divines, and read and thought to
" so little purpose, as that I should now be un-

" acquainted with the truths of Christianity. " As I know these things, happy were I if I " did them. Here, I acknowledge, I fail; but " if my practice corresponds with my know- " ledge, all would be well.' I am sure this is " precisely what I should have said myself, a " few years ago. Allow me to state, as a coun- " terpart to this, a case which has often occur- " red to my thoughts. Suppose that, in the " last year of our Lord's ministration, some old " acquaintance should have inquired at one of " the disciples, Philip for instance, ' I wonder " what sort of a person this Jesus of Nazareth " is; pray, Philip, do you know him?' Philip " would of course answer, ' To be sure I do " know him, no person knows him better; I " have not been two days together out of his " company these three years. Many a wonder- " ful work have I seen him do, many a charm- " ing discourse have I heard from his mouth. " O! neighbour, if you but knew him as well as " I do!' Yet this was actually the man to whom " our Lord found occasion to say, " Have I " been so long time with you, and yet hast thou " not known me, Philip?" Query,—May not " the same words perhaps be applicable to one " disciple which were applied to another, now as " well as then?

" In general, all who have had an ordinary

" religious education, seem to be satisfied that " they possess a sufficient knowledge of the " doctrines of our religion, and never think of " calling their knowledge in question. By at- " tending to one or two pointed declarations of " scripture, I dare say you will agree with me " in thinking, that a just and correct knowledge " of divine truth, is neither so generally pos- " sessed, nor so faintly and equivocally marked " in people's conduct and language, as is gene- " rally supposed. Our Saviour, in interceding " for his disciples, prays, " Sanctify them through " thy truth; thy word is truth," John xvii. 17.; " intimating, that the truths revealed and as- " serted in scripture, when known and received, " are the means of producing an universal holi- " ness of disposition and life. " This is life " eternal, that they should *know* thee, the only " true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast " sent," John xvii. 3. " Yea, doubtless, I " count all things but loss, for the excellency of " the *knowledge* of Christ Jesus my Lord," " Phil. iii. 8. Such was the judgment of one " who knew what it was to want, and also to " possess this knowledge. " If thou *knewest* " the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, " Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked " of him, and he would have given thee living " water," John iv. 10. This implies that divine

" truth, particularly what relates to the person,
" character, and offices of Christ, when clearly
" understood and known, has an instantaneous
" effect on the heart; it excites a spiritual appe-
" tite, and leads to its highest gratification.
" Whoever knows the gift of God to sinners,
" its necessity and its worth, will earnestly ask,
" and will infallibly receive, the highest spiri-
" tual blessings. When such effects are ascrib-
" ed to the knowledge of the gospel, and when
" these effects are so rarely to be seen, it is but
" a logical inference, that, even in this Christian
" land, and among us divines, the true know-
" ledge of scripture-truth is but rare also.

" I will adduce another test of a man's possess-
" ing true knowledge. Now, prepare yourself
" here for some of my oddities; for, depend on
" it, you will find oddities in me as I advance.
" The gospel has been called *good tidings, good*
" *tidings of great joy;* and the appellation well
" suits its nature. One would think it would
" also prove *welcome tidings* to every one that
" hears it. Accordingly, while an Evangelist
" merely proclaims that the way to heaven is
" open, I believe his tidings are welcome e-
" nough; but, along with his proclamation of
" peace on earth and good-will to men, there
" are other facts announced, connected with a
" sinner's salvation, which are not so readily ad-

" mitted. There are truths relative to man's " condition as a sinner, and to the way of sal- " vation provided for him, which we cannot " positively know till they are told us; and " which, when told, we can hardly believe, or " allow to be true. St Paul found this to be " the case, and asserts it in very explicit terms. " " The natural man receiveth not the things of " the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to " him," 1 Cor. ii. 14. Our Saviour's declara- " tions concerning himself, were received in the " same manner, even by many of those who " had welcomed him as the Messiah. They " said, " This is a hard saying, who can bear " it? And many went back, and walked no " more with him," John vi. 60, 66. You find " in Nicodemus, a man of rank and education, " the same difficulty of admitting or assenting " to what Christ had affirmed. Even after our " Lord had stated to him, that his words were " to be understood figuratively, and that he " spoke of a spiritual renovation, still the diffi- " culty remained, and " how can these things " be?" are the last words of Nicodemus which " we find recorded in the conversation, John " iii. 1, 21.

" Now, my dear Sir, if, in the course of your " examination or learning of religious truths, " you have met with nothing but what was

" plain and intelligible,—if you have met with " nothing that has puzzled your understanding, " that startled your belief, that made you recoil " at the sense the words seemed manifestly to " convey,—in short, that forced you to exclaim " with Nicodemus, though more than half " shocked at your own distrust of the word of " God, " How can these things be so?" it is " more than probable that there are doctrines in " the scriptures, and necessarily connected with " our reception of the rest, which you have " not yet known. Marvel not, my friend, at " my strong language, but ponder it, and then " judge.

" Now, I am sure that I have at last put " your candour to the proof, and have exposed " myself to as hard thoughts of me, as ever " you entertained of a gloomy enthusiast. I " am sure you cannot be equally well satisfied " with this letter as with the former ones. I " must stop to bear my testimony to the cha- " racter which you so justly give yourself. I " remember well, that, from the first of our " acquaintance, you shewed a steady attach- " ment to principles, both moral and religious, " far beyond what *I* felt; you shewed your " abhorrence of various indecencies and profani- " ties, with which I was little affected. If to " this natural force of mind, there was added

" an ardent love to a Redeemer, and lively af-
" fection to his people, with a cordial zeal
" for extending his kingdom, and saving the
" souls of men, what a great character, what a
" valuable member of a Christian community,
" would it form! But, to form this character,
" " the truth as it is in Jesus," must be known
" and felt."

Many subsequent letters passed, with seriousness on the one side, and candour on the other, but no approximation of sentiments took place.

Mr Stewart's next attempt to communicate his own views of religion, was made to a lady of great respectability, with whom he had lived on the most friendly terms for several years; and in what manner his benevolent design was interpreted, an extract from her reply will shew.

" *Sept.* 9. 1797.

" Since you no longer find pleasure in dances,
" dinners, and suppers, it is natural for you to
" decline them; at the same time, there is a
" degree of civility due to those that pay you
" civility, that I should have thought might
" have carried you an hour or two to that said
" ball you mention, without in the least de-

" grading you in any shape. But that is *my*
" *ignorance.*

" When you feel in your heart an ardent de-
" sire to see your friends in * * * *, they will
" be happy to see you. But I acknowledge
" myself one to whom your visit will afford no
" sort of satisfaction, if you are to view it as a
" sacrifice, a murdering of your time, a paying
" of a debt, or coming as if to pay the interest
" of money borrowed. No, no, my friend, the
" pleasure of friendly intercourse must be mu-
" tual, or not at all. I entertained no hope of
" seeing you this season, so what you say on
" that subject does not the least surprise. Such
" *sinners* as we, would perfectly pollute you.

" Strange, indeed, to suppose that I would
" not read, or would read with negligence, any
" paper you should send me ! Into what is your
" mind about to contract ? I read the letter over,
" and over, and over again, with all the atten-
" tion I am capable of, and there is nothing in
" it to which I make the smallest objection ; at
" the same time, I cannot help observing, that
" the writer of it has an opinion, both of his
" own divine inspiration, and that of his friends,
" that suits not at all with my faith. Warmly
" to pursue the study of the gospel, is highly
" proper and meritorious in all, more especially
" clergymen. But it appears strange to me,

" that studying the gospel of peace should sour
" you at the whole world, and make you think
" that all who are not exactly up to your way
" of thinking, are no longer worthy of your re-
" gard or attention. I really believe that you
" even refuse us the hope of being saved."

The benevolence of Mr Stewart was not repressed by this letter, without making another calm appeal to the judgment and the heart. He therefore again writes :—

" *Moulin, Oct.* 6. 1797.

" I am sorry to find that you are so much
" hurt by what you call my Puritanical princi-
" ples. I am the more surprised at it, as I do
" not recollect that in any of my letters for the
" last twelvemonth, I formally stated any prin-
" ciples at all. I suspect either that you must
" have heard of them at second hand only, or
" rather that you have conjectured or inferred
" them from the style of my letters, but with-
" out knowing precisely what were the princi-
" ples which I avowed. In fact, I was in no
" haste to declare them. For, however much
" satisfaction it would give me to find the friends
" I love best, agree with me in sentiment, yet I
" do not think myself entitled to impose my
" creed on any one. All I would seek to do in

" this matter is, to induce others to examine " closely their own principles, and likewise those " inculcated in scripture,—to compare the two " sets together, and see whether they coincide. " This indeed I consider as a work of the high- " est importance. From being led, no matter " how, to make this inquiry into my own case, " I found that the scriptures plainly and posi- " tively asserted facts of which I had hardly any " notion,—that some of the religious principles " which I had maintained, disagreed with the " scriptures. I saw the fullest reason to be sa- " tisfied that the Bible must be right, and that I " must have been wrong. I knew, at the same " time, that my principles agreed in the main " with those of many of my friends, with whose " sentiments on religious subjects I had sufficient " opportunity to be acquainted. I saw at once " that I had been in an error, so must they also. " I have been officious enough to tell them so, " for I have more than one correspondence of " the kind on my hand. Indeed, I consider it " as the highest service I can do them. Can you " wonder, then, my dear parental friend, if I " should be particularly anxious to do it to you, " to whom I am under so many obligations, and " to whom I have so many reasons to be grate- " ful? With this view, I sent you the copy of " a letter, (which by the way was written a few

" months ago by myself to an old college inti-
" mate), the purpose of which was to persuade
" my correspondent, from scriptural declarations,
" and scriptural examples, that he might posi-
" tively be in a state of ignorance, and conse-
" quently of error, with regard to some of the
" truths which essentially concerned his eternal
" welfare. This is precisely the point I would
" at present urge with you. I do not seek to
" state of my own accord what those truths are,
" for then I might be told that I was laying
" down my own opinions, arrogating to myself
" inspiration, infallibility, and I know not what.
" I wish rather that you should discover them,
" in consequence of your own inquiry ; at the
" same time, it would give me singular pleasure
" to accompany and assist you in the search, and
" when we should have made the discovery, we
" should rejoice together much more than ever
" Pythagoras or Archimedes did at the discovery
" of a mathematical truth. But this might be
" a work of time.

" In one thing I think you will agree with
" me, that if the discovery of truth be really
" our object, it would be needless to stop or go
" out of our way to examine the claims, or the
" dogmas of the sectarists. We must first
" know the truth ourselves, before we can pre-
" tend to judge who among our forefathers, or

" our countrymen, may have found it, or who " may have missed it. Let Protestants or Pa- " pists, Puritans or Methodists, Churchmen " or Dissenters, *Reliefers* or Seceders, be in " the right or in the wrong, that can be no " rule to us; if fools or villains, if fanatics or " persecutors, if a Pizarro or a Philip the Se- " cond, profess to believe the gospel, and call " themselves Christians, that cannot have " changed the nature of the truth itself, nor " be any reason why we should disbelieve or " disregard it. We are not obliged to follow " the creed of Calvin, or of Luther, any more " than that of Oliver Cromwell, or of Thomas " Paine. Our business is with the doctrines of " Christ and his apostles,—with those scrip- " tures which were given by inspiration of God, " and which alone can make us wise unto sal- " vation. For the same reason, it is unneces- " sary to spend time in defending myself or my " expressions from the charges of illiberality, " want of charity, &c. which you have hinted at " in your last letter. As for that, *transeat cum* " *cæteris.* The great point which claims the " attention of each of us, is, not what is the " opinion of such a favourite author, or such an " esteemed friend? Is it liberal, or charitable, " or the contrary? But, what says the di- " vine oracle? What has the Lord, our Crea-

" tor, our Sovereign, our Judge, been pleased " to tell us? Whatever information he has " thought fit to communicate, it surely behoves " us to attend to it most seriously, to receive it " with submissive docility, and to apply it di- " rectly and diligently to our own use.

" Many an hour have we spent together in " studying languages, metaphysics, &c. Now " that a vastly more interesting object, the ac- " quiring of saving knowledge, has presented " itself, you may believe me, that I would " gladly join with you in the pursuit of that " object with more relish and eagerness than " ever I engaged in a philosophical discussion. " Could you give me the prospect, by reading " or conversation, to lead you to the knowledge " of some of those important spiritual truths, of " which we both were certainly ignorant a short " while ago, then I would fly to visit you with " a more " ardent desire" than ever, and I " would even postpone some employments, " which I would not suspend on any considera- " tions of mere compliment or civility. But if, " on the contrary, I should find that my visit " had served no such useful purpose, then, in- " deed, I must confess that I would account it " nothing else than what you call it,—a sacri- " fice,—an unprofitable sacrifice.

" I have no doubt that you will be ready to

" tell me, that you have often read the Bible " with attention and pleasure, and that you " are still equally willing to read it. I had " done so too, and I supposed I knew suffi- " ciently its general scope and tenor, though " not the precise meaning of every particular " passage. But I find I had more to learn " than I thought of. And whatever measure " of knowledge I may have yet attained, I am " sure I have still much to learn, and have no " doubt but that I may derive more light and " knowledge from these sacred books every day " I live. As we are both but learners, what " should hinder us from pursuing, as formerly, " our studies together? If I should happen to " think myself a lesson or two a-head of you at " our outsetting, we may go on as fellow-stu- " dents notwithstanding. One preliminary step, " I think, would be very useful, that is, to re- " vise those arguments by which the inspira- " tion of the scriptures is evinced. There is " very ample and convincing proofs that those " books we call inspired, were certainly written " by divine direction and superintendency.— " And it is of consequence, when we read them, " that that conviction should be fresh and live- " ly, in order that every word we read may be " received, not as the word of man, but of God. " I read lately, along with ———, Doddridge's

" Dissertation on the Inspiration of the New " Testament, in the third volume of his Family " Expositor, which I think plain, judicious, " and impressive. His three sermons on the " Evidences of the Gospel, are also plain and " convincing. Either of these performances, " or both if at hand, might, I think, be perused " with advantage, before entering on a course " of scripture reading.

" You might be sensible, dear Madam, that " to search the scriptures with care, is not the " business of divines exclusively. All are " equally interested in knowing what God has " revealed to man. It would therefore be " highly desireable to associate with us in these " sacred studies, as many as we can persuade to " join us. Might not you easily engage Mr " ——— to accompany you in your reading? " Or, if he should not read along with you, he " might read the same book at home to Mrs " ———, to whom I understand he is in the " use of reading for their mutual entertainment, " and thus you could talk over the subject at " meeting, and see which had profited most.

" When ——— would see you in earnest " about such an object, he too might be induced " to join you. At any rate, I hope A——— " would willingly attend you in each stage of " your progress. And thus you might be the

" means of bringing others, as well as yourself,
" to the knowledge of those facts and doctrines
" on which depends the everlasting happiness
" of their souls and of yours. So it appears, that
" when I can scrape together a little time, I can
" still write a long letter on a subject which in-
" terests me. I wish, dear Lady, your bodily
" health and ease were such as to allow me to
" expect a long letter in return. I remember
" the time when neither of us counted paper or
" postage. And what was the subject?"

In answer to another letter in which Mr Stewart had attempted to explain the condition on which men stand with respect to the divine dispensations,—she writes as follows:

July 14. 1798.

" I have repeatedly and attentively read over
" your last letter, also the distinction that you
" make between the covenant of works and the
" covenant of grace. I have looked out all your
" quotations, considered all with the utmost at-
" tention I can command; and have also talk-
" ed over the subject with our mutual friend
" Mr ——; and after all, I am no more inclined
" to give up the covenant of works, than you
" are to give up the covenant of grace. Your
" argument, in my opinion, strikes at the root

" of all moral virtue, and must prove the ruin,
" not the salvation, of mankind. My creed is,
" that we must strive what we can to take the
" advantage of both these covenants, by the
" strictest attention we can pay to our moral
" duty; and when our nature fails us, we are to
" trust to the covenant of grace and mercy,
" through our Redeemer.

" Your new creed appears to me to lean
" strongly towards the doctrine of necessity.
" Some of your quotations are necessity as strong
" as can be worded;—" that the elect were
" chosen before the creation of the world," &c.
" I believe that the worthy and the good were
" the elect chosen, but not that they were
" picked out individually. Sure I am, that you
" are no such enemy to morality in your con-
" duct, as you are in your doctrine. Give up
" the covenant of works! No, surely, never
" while I retain my senses."

Mr Stewart's answer shall close this correspondence.

Moulin, July 21. 1798.

" I am happy that I have an opportunity of
" acknowledging thus early your very valuable
" favour of the ———. I am much indebted
" to you for the patient attention with which

" you have studied my letters and *quotations;*
" and for your full and candid avowal of the re-
" sult. This avowal is to me very satisfactory.
" The common error of weak minds, with re-
" spect to religious doctrines, and which I meet
" with every day, is, that they fancy they be-
" lieve such or such propositions, and aver that
" they do believe them, when in reality they
" do not. Your clearer head, and more solid
" judgment, have saved you from this error, for
" you seem to have ascertained distinctly what
" you do, and what you do not believe. The ex-
" periment is now fairly made, how far a person's
" natural understanding will admit the truth
" of scripture doctrines on the authority of di-
" vine testimony. The result corresponds exact-
" ly, in your case, with what scripture itself tells
" us must always happen, 1 Cor. ii. 14. I think,
" too, you must observe the truth of what I re-
" marked some time ago, that there were facts
" asserted in the Bible which you probably did
" not yet know, and which, when you should
" be told them, you probably would not believe.
" The experiment is, I think, decisive, and
" proves the necessity of the agency of a supe-
" rior power, to turn men from " darkness unto
" light," from a state of blindness to a state of
" vision; Acts xxvi. 18. and John ix. 39.—41.
" before they will believe, or distinctly appre-
" hend, many truths relative to salvation. This

" point being ascertained, I expect no more
" from argument; and I am perfectly willing,
" with you, to put an end to controversy on
" the subject. I would only request you to fix
" your attention occasionally on the proofs of
" the divine origin of the Christian religion, and
" the inspiration of the scriptures; and also on
" the difference between the points therein as-
" serted, and your own creed; and to observe
" how far the difference is trivial or important.
" It will be worth while to observe, what are
" the effects of our respective creeds. Whether
" mine will prove the destruction of moral virtue,
" as you apprehend its tendency to be, time and
" trial must shew. I dare not make professions,
" nor hold myself up as a model. My feelings
" and affections have been all my life remark-
" ably cold, and my constitution very phleg-
" matic. However satisfied I am with my prin-
" ciples, I cannot say the same of my temper
" and practice. I am convinced, however, that
" the direct tendency of the truths of the gos-
" pel, so far as they actually influence the mind,
" that is, just as far as they are actually believ-
" ed, is to make men honest, kind, generous
" to others, humble, devout, obedient toward
" God, patient, contented, happy in themselves.
" And I know that the grace of God is sufficient
" to make me feel the influence of these truths;

" so that my temper and conduct shall be more
" and more formed by their influence, and on
" that I found my hope of improvement. I
" know, too, that the same power can give you
" a new heart, Ezek. xi. 19. 20. to believe
" and submit to his way of salvation. I thank
" you for your kind admonition with re-
" spect to rash or unwarrantable judgment. I
" am convinced such a temper must be very
" different from the true Christian spirit. You
" see, however, that in the present case I do
" not judge of you so rashly as you may have
" supposed, for I do not give you up as lost for
" ever. So far from it, that I have an earnest
" hope, (and I do not this moment know any
" earthly price for which I would give it up),
" that the Holy Spirit, who hath brought one
" of us to the knowledge of the truth, when we
" were both alike strangers to it, and averse
" from receiving it, just like the rest of the
" world, (Eph. ii. 3.) will, in his own time and
" manner, bring the other likewise, (2 Tim.
" ii. 25.). I am far from despairing that we
" shall yet agree more cordially than ever, though
" for the present we differ. In the mean time,
" let us by all means study mutual forbearance
" and kindness. I am sure I have much reason
" to admire yours, which has been long tried,
" and continues undiminished. I am by no

" means for giving up corresponding. I shall " only beg this much allowance for my pecu- " liarities, considering how I am impressed with " the importance of religious truths, and the " necessity of having all my feelings, purposes, " and actions, regulated by a regard to religious " principles, in the minutest, as well as in the " most important particulars, that you bear " with me, whenever my letters, or my conver- " sation, happen to discover that spirit. Indeed, " I cannot endure the thought of being asham- " ed of my Master, or of shrinking from avow- " ing my attachment to him."

We deem it worth while to turn aside for a little, to notice those indirect exertions made by Mr Stewart, to diffuse the good which he himself had freely received. These earnest exertions demonstrate the reality of the change he had undergone, and beautifully illustrate the benevolence inseparable from Christian character. But it is now time to introduce Mr Stewart in his altered character, ministering to his own people, and the happy effects cannot be so well represented, as by laying before the reader his own narrative of the events subsequent to Mr Simeon's visit *.

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* This narrative, so often referred to, was given to the public in 1800, in form of a Letter to Mr Black. That it

"From that time, I began to preach Jesus "Christ, with some degree of knowledge and "confidence. From August 1797 to January "1798, I preached a course of sermons on the "fundamental doctrines of Christianity; follow- "ing, for the most part, the selection and order "of texts in the tract entitled "Short Sermons*."

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was well received by the friends of religion, it is hardly necessary to state. Indeed, a work like that at Moulin had for years been unknown among our languishing half-dead congregations. Nor would it be easy, among publications of a similar kind, to name one of greater interest, whether we consider the candour, modesty, and intelligence of the writer, or the intrinsic importance of the contents. Letters from entire strangers, both in England and America, bore testimony how well the narrative was received; and, among others, we may mention the venerable Newton, who, both at the time of its appearance, and several years after, expressed a most favourable judgment of the publication.

* The texts in the above-named pamphlet are as follows:

Matth. xvi. 26. What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

1 John iii. 4. Sin is the transgression of the law.

Rom. iii. 23. All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

Gal. iii. 10. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.

" I was now enabled to shew, from scripture, " that all men are by nature enemies to God, " disobedient to his law, and on that account " exposed to his just indignation and curse. I " therefore addressed them, not as persons who " were already, from education, birth-right, or " local situation, possessed of saving faith and " other Christian graces, but as sinners, under

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Rom. vi. 23. The wages of sin is death.

Acts xvi. 30. What shall I do to be saved?

Mark i. 15. Repent ye, and believe the gospel.

1 Tim. i. 15. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief.

John vi. 37. Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.

Rom. v. 1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Peter ii. 7. Unto you which believe he is precious.

Heb. xii. 14. Follow holiness; without which, no man shall see the Lord.

Tit. ii. 13. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Luke xi. 13. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Heb. xii. 27. It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.

Heb. ii. 3. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?

" sentence of death, and who had " not as yet " obtained mercy." I did not, as before, mere- " ly reprove them for particular faults or vices, " and urge them to the practice of particular " virtues; but told them, that the whole of their " affections and inclinations needed to be point- " ed in a new direction, and even their virtues " to be new-modelled. I shewed, that this, " supposing it done, could not atone, however, " for past offences, nor wipe away guilt already " contracted; and that sin could not be remit- " ted without satisfaction made to the broken " law of God; that neither could purity of heart, " and constant obedience in future, recover their " title to the reward of eternal life, which had " been at first conferred as a free gift by God, and " was now wholly forfeited by sin: yet that " their case was by no means desperate; for we " had the glad tidings to tell, that God had " made provision for the complete salvation of " sinners; that he had appointed his own eter- " nal Son, in the human nature, to procure for " sinners the pardon of sin, and a title to glory, " by his own obedience and sufferings; that, in " conferring these blessings, God acts as the so- " vereign dispenser of his own gifts, not in con- " sideration of any merit (for there is none) in " the person on whom he bestows them; that a " conformity of our will to the law of God, which

" I formerly considered as the ground of our
" acceptance, was itself a gift bestowed by God,
" in consequence of his having first justified,
" accepted, and adopted us to be his children;
" that in this great salvation wrought out by
" Christ for sinners, love to God and man, an
" abhorrence of evil, and a disposition to what
" is good, were included as essential parts, in-
" separably connected with the rest; insomuch,
" that if a man is not renewed in the spirit of
" his mind, neither are his sins pardoned, nor
" his person accepted with God. I urged them
" to attend to what the word of God declared
" to be their condition; not to be deceived with
" vain hopes of recommending themselves to
" his favour by their own exertions; but as
" humble needy supplicants, to apply to him,
" through the merits of Christ, for pardon, and
" the gift of his Spirit to make them serve him
" with fidelity and delight; to be diligent in
" studying the word of truth, which alone can
" make us wise unto salvation; and having ob-
" tained grace from God, to practise diligently
" every active and every self-denying duty, and
" to abound in good fruit, to their own advance-
" ment in holiness and comfort, to the temporal
" and spiritual benefit of their fellow-creatures,
" and to the praise of him who had called them
" out of darkness into his marvellous light. I

" thought it right often to caution them against
" judging of their state by transient impressions
" or emotions of which they might be conscious;
" but only by a prevailing habitual preference
" of God's honour and service to their own gra-
" tification, appearing in the uniform tenor of
" their purposes and actions.

" The novelty of the matter, and some
" change in my manner of preaching, excited
" attention. People began to think more, and
" sometimes to talk together, of religious sub-
" jects, and of the sermons they heard. But I
" did not yet know of any deep or lasting im-
" pressions having been made. The two per-
" sons before mentioned as earliest converted,
" had by this time got clearer views of the gos-
" pel, were enabled to derive comfort from the
" word of salvation, and began to bear their
" testimony to the grace of God their Saviour.
" They were in use of visiting occasionally a
" poor infirm woman, who had long walked
" with God, and who now lived alone in a
" mean cottage in the neighbouring village.
" It was proposed that they should come to-
" gether to her house at a time appointed, and
" that I and some of my family should join
" them, and spend an evening hour or two in
" reading, conversation, and prayer. In pro-
" cess of time, different persons, who were in-

" quiring after the one thing needful, hearing
" how we were employed, and believing that
" God was with us, were at their own request
" admitted of our party. In this poor woman's
" little smoky hovel, we continued to hold our
" weekly meetings, to August 1799, when she
" was called away to join the general assembly
" of the first-born above. Her growth in grace
" had been very conspicuous, and her death was
" triumphant.

" In summer 1798, the Lord's supper was
" dispensed in our congregation, at the usual
" time of the year. For some weeks before, I
" endeavoured in preaching to explain more
" fully, and with more application to the con-
" science, the nature of the ordinance, and the
" character of those who, under the denomina-
" tion of disciples, were commanded to keep it.
" The exhortations and warnings then given,
" appeared to be accompanied with a divine
" blessing. Some of the ordinary communi-
" cants, judging themselves to be in an uncon-
" verted state, kept back, of their own accord,
" from partaking of the sacrament. Others,
" after conversing with me privately on the
" subject, took the same resolution. Many of
" those who might otherwise have applied for
" admission, forbore to apply. I inferred this
" from the comparatively small number of per-

" sons applying. For some years before, the " number of candidates for admission each sum- " mer amounted to thirty, forty, and sometimes " near fifty. In summer 1798, there were not " above twelve; of whom nine were admitted. " The sacrament was dispensed the same year " again in November, on which occasion there " were only six more new communicants ad- " mitted.

" Although the number of communicants " was thus for the time diminished, yet the " number of those who were brought under " concern about their eternal interests was in- " creasing. This concern shewed itself chiefly " among the younger people under twenty-five " or thirty. Their knowledge was yet imper- " fect. A natural shyness often hindered them " long from discovering to others what they " thought or felt. They had as yet no friend " or intimate whom they judged able, from ex- " perience, to understand their situation, or to " give them counsel. Some of them began to " visit one of the two earlier converts formerly " mentioned, from whose reading and conver- " sation they derived considerable benefit. By " means of this common friend, they were " brought more acquainted with each other. " One might now observe at church, after di- " vine service, two or three small groups form-

" ing themselves round our few more advanced
" believers, and withdrawing from the crowd
" into the adjacent fields, to exchange Chris-
" tian salutations, and hold Christian converse
" together; while a little cousin, or other
" young relative, followed as a silent attend-
" ant on the party, and listened earnestly to
" their religious discourse.

" As the sacrament of the Lord's Supper had
" been much abused, by admitting, without
" strict examination or special instruction, all
" candidates who could give a tolerable answer
" to common questions, and who were free from
" grosser immoralities; so it must be confessed,
" that the sacrament of baptism had been still
" more profaned. Nothing but one kind of
" scandal was understood to preclude a man
" from admission to this ordinance. Gross ig-
" norance, or immoral behaviour, only laid a
" man open to some admonition or reproof; or
" at most laid him under the necessity of pro-
" curing another sponsor; but hardly ever hin-
" dered the baptism of his child. Nothing sub-
" jects a man to greater disgrace and obloquy
" among us, than to have his child remain un-
" baptised. The dominion of custom in this
" matter is so despotic, that most parents
" would chuse rather to carry their children a
" hundred miles to be baptised by a Popish

" priest, than to be refused baptism when they
" demand it. The superstitious notions, and
" other abuses attending our celebration of this
" sacrament, called loudly for reformation.—
" Last year, I preached a short course of ser-
" mons on baptism. At the same time, agree-
" ably to a recent resolution and recommenda-
" tion of the presbytery to which I belong, I
" revived the laws of the church which had
" fallen into disuse, relative to this ordinance,
" particularly that which prohibits private bap-
" tism, *Acts of Assembly*, 1690. X. Whenever
" I baptise a child on a week day, whether in
" the church or elsewhere, I give previous inti-
" mation of sermon; and, after preaching, I ad-
" minister the ordinance in the presence of the
" congregation *. By these means, many have

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* " In process of time, I found that this practice need-
" ed some restriction. It was always desirable that both
" parents should be present at baptism, as being parties
" peculiarly interested in the solemn transaction. They
" could rarely attend on the ordinance in church, without
" risking the health of the new-born infant, and of the
" mother not yet fully recovered. It was likewise inconve-
" nient for private families, especially in such circumstan-
" ces, to have a mixed congregation of people assembled at
" their houses; nor could many be accommodated. There-
" fore, instead of intimating sermon, I have now been long
" accustomed to allow the head of the family to ask such

" been brought to understand better the nature " of this sacrament, and to attend to it with " more reverence. It had been long customary " for the parent to give an entertainment, ac- " cording to his station, to his neighbours and " connections, immediately after the baptism; " by which means this sacred ordinance, in- " stead of being regarded as a most solemn re- " ligious service, had degenerated into an occa- " sion of carnal mirth and festivity. The more " religiously disposed amongst us have set the " example of discontinuing this practice.

" The following month, March 1799, I be- " gan a course of practical sermons on Regene- " ration, which I continued to the beginning of " July following. These were attended with a " more general awakening than had yet appear- " ed amongst us. Seldom a week passed in " which we did not see or hear of one, two, or " three persons, brought under deep concern " about their souls, accompanied with strong " convictions of sin, and earnest inquiry after a

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" friends or neighbours as he chooses to have present; " and I read and expound a portion of scripture, in pre- " sence of the parents and the company assembled. This " private exposition and application of the word of God, I " have found profitable, as well as the more public preach- " ing of it."

" Saviour. It was a great advantage to these " that there were others on the road before " them; for they were seldom at a loss now to " find an acquaintance to whom they could " freely communicate their anxious thoughts. " The house of one of our most established " Christians became the chief resort of all who " wished to spend an hour in reading or con- " versing about spiritual subjects. Some who " had but newly begun to entertain serious " thoughts about religion, and who had not yet " come so far as to speak out their mind, would " contrive an errand to this person's house, and " listen to her talk. She was visited at other " times by those who were drawn only by cu- " riosity or a disputatious spirit, who wanted " to cavil at her words, or draw her into con- " troversy. Such visitors she did not avoid, " and at last they ceased to trouble her.

" Other experienced Christians among us " have been extremely useful to their younger " brethren and sisters. Their conversation and " example have been principal means of turn- " ing the attention of the young to religion, " and of edifying those who have been already " awakened. Such persons I find most ser- " viceable auxiliaries. If they be neither *pro-* " *phets*, nor *apostles*, nor *teachers*, yet their " usefulness in the church entitles them to the

" appellation of *helps*, 1 Cor. xii. 28. Nor do
" I think an apostle would hesitate to acknow-
" ledge them, both men and women, in the re-
" lation of *fellow-labourers*, Phil. iv. 3. Nor
" has success in this divine work been confined
" to instruments raised up among ourselves.
" The same happy effects have in a certain
" measure attended the preaching, the prayers,
" or conversation of pious brethren, who have
" assisted at the celebration of the Lord's sup-
" per, or made us other occasional visits.

" It is observable, that the work of conver-
" sion has been begun and carried on among
" this people, in a quiet manner, without any
" confusion, and without those ungovernable agi-
" tations of mind, or convulsions of the body,
" or shrieking, or fainting, which have often ac-
" companied a general awakening in other places.
" One young woman was so much moved in
" church, in March 1799, that she wept bitterly,
" and her friends thought it prudent to convey
" her out a little before the congregation was dis-
" missed. She was for five or six days unfit for
" going about her usual work. In June follow-
" ing, at the time of our sacrament, she felt emo-
" tions of joy for a few days, to such a degree as
" to withdraw her regard, in a great measure,
" from sensible objects. Spiritual affections were
" unusually strong in her, and spiritual objects

" appeared visible and near; but her sentiments " were quite correct and scriptural. A few days " afterwards, when her emotions had subsided, " she told me that she was at the time sensible " that her mind was somewhat unsettled, but " that she found comfort in recollecting the a- " postle's words, " If we are beside ourselves, it " is to God." This was exactly her case. She " continues a humble lively Christian, and, ex- " cept these two short intervals, she has regu- " larly performed her ordinary work, as a maid- " servant, to the satisfaction of her master and " mistress, in whose service she still remains. " Another woman, the mother of a family, in " April last, was so much moved in hearing ser- " mon, that of her own accord she left the " church. Excepting these two instances, I " know of none whose emotions under the " preaching of the word discovered themselves " in any other manner than by silent tears.

" Having lately made an enumeration of those " of our congregation, whom, to the best of my " judgment, I trust I can reckon truly enlight- " ened with the saving knowledge of Christ, I " find their number about seventy. The greater " part of these are under thirty years of age. Se- " veral are above forty; six or seven above fifty; " one fifty-six; and one above seventy. Of " children under twelve or fourteen, there are a

" good many who seem to have a liking to re-
" ligion; but we find it difficult to form a de-
" cided opinion of their case. Of persons who
" have died within these twelve months, three
" we are persuaded, and we hope two or three
" others, have slept in Jesus.

" A very considerable number are friendly to
" religion, and countenance and defend the
" truth, even while they do not as yet appear
" to live under its power. A few among our-
" selves did for a while jeer and deride the god-
" ly; but such persons are left in so small a mi-
" nority, that they have ceased to be trouble-
" some. The scriptures, too, are so generally
" read and referred to, that the truth itself serves
" to stop the mouth of scoffers. We are some-
" times told that the sentiments and language
" of our people are much misrepresented, and
" are the object of much wonder, and ridicule,
" and invective in other places. But we only
" hear of such things; they are hardly permitted
" to come nigh us. The chief opposition arises
" from those who possess superior scholarship,
" and acquaintance with the scriptures. These
" contend, that there can be nothing substan-
" tial or necessary in that experimental know-
" ledge which illiterate persons may pretend to
" have attained; and that it is mere arrogance
" in them to imagine that they can have a larger

" share of saving knowledge than men who " are greater scholars, and better versed in the " scriptures. " Are we blind also?" has ever " been the indignant language of carnal wisdom, " of literary pride, and of self-righteous pre- " sumption.

" It is evident, that the scriptures represent " all mankind as divided into two classes. These " are distinguished from each other in the most " explicit manner; and the distinction is mark- " ed by the strongest language, and the most " significant comparisons. They are called the " children of God, and the children of the devil, " 1 John iii. 10; the children of the kingdom, " and the children of the wicked one, Matth. " xiii. 38; the just and the wicked, Matth. xiii. " 49; they who are dead in trespasses and sins, " and they who are quickened together with " Christ, Eph. ii. 1—6. They are compared to " wheat and tares, Matth. xiii. 25; to good and " bad fishes, Matth. xiii. 47, 48; to sheep and " goats, Matth. xxv. 32. In the general tenor " of my preaching, especially in discussing the " important doctrine of regeneration, I have " endeavoured to keep in view this distinction, " and to exhibit it clearly to the notice of my " hearers. Many have been not a little offend- " ed at such a discrimination; have found fault " with the preacher; have complained of un-

" charitable judgment, pleading that it was " God's prerogative to judge the heart; that " they hoped theirs was good, though they " did not make such a parading profession of " religion, &c. The truth has prevailed, how- " ever, and some have confessed to me, that " their first serious thoughts about the state of " their souls arose from the surprise and resent- " ment they felt on being classed, under the " character of unbelievers, along with murder- " ers and idolators, Rev. xxi. 8. But in giving " such offensive, though necessary warnings, I " had much need of the Spirit of Christ, to re- " press all asperity of language and manner, to " awaken tender compassion for those whom I " addressed, and to enable me to speak the truth " in love.

" I observe among our young converts a con- " siderable variety of frames, but a striking uni- " formity of character. They are dejected or " elevated, according as their regard is more " fixed on their own deficiencies and corrup- " tions, or on the glorious sufficiency of Christ. " But all of them are characterised by lowli- " ness of mind, by a warm attachment to each " other, and to all who love the Lord Jesus, " and by the affections set on things above. I " know no instances among them of persons " trusting for comfort or direction to dreams or

" visions, impulses or impressions; and hardly " an instance of seeking comfort from external " signs or tokens, arbitrarily assumed by the " inquirer, after the example of Abraham's ser- " vant, Gen. xxiv. 14. and of Gideon, Judges " vi. 36—40.

" We have not yet to lament any great fall- " ing off in those who appeared to have once " undergone a saving change. There may be " persons who were for a time inquiring with " some apparent earnestness, and afterwards fell " back to their former unconcern. I have rea- " son to suspect that there may be several in " this situation, though I have not access to " know the exact state of their minds. May " the Lord discover it to themselves in time! " But all, so far as I know, who seemed to have " been once truly humbled for their sins, and " made to feel in their hearts the grace of God " in the gospel, continue thus far to maintain " a humble, spiritual, conscientious walk. They " have a constant appetite for the sincere milk " of the word, and for Christian fellowship with " one another. The younger sort have lost " their former levity of speech and behaviour, " and are become devout and sober-minded; " those more advanced in life, have laid aside " their selfishness and worldly-mindedness, and " are grown humble, contented, and thankful.

" The external effects of a general concern about " religion have appeared in the behaviour even " of those who do not seem to have experienced a " change of heart. While the younger people at- " tended a Sabbath-school, those who were grown " up used to spend the evening of that day in " sauntering about the fields and woods in gos- " siping parties, or visiting their acquaintance at " a distance, without improving their time by " any profitable exercise. Now there is hardly " a lounger to be seen, nor any person walking " abroad, except going to some house or meet- " ing, where he may hear the scriptures read. " Swearing, profane talking, foolish and inde- " cent jesting, have in a great measure ceased. " —At *late wakes*, where people assemble to " watch by the body of a deceased neighbour, " the whole night used to be spent in childish, " noisy sports and pastimes. Even the apart- " ment where the corpse lay was the scene of " their revelry. This unnatural custom, which " is still pretty general over a great part of the " Highlands, is almost wholly discontinued in " this part of the country. They still assemble " on such occasions, but they pass the time in " reading the Bible, or some religious book, and " in sober conversation.

" In reply to your request of relating a few " of the more remarkable cases of conversion,

" which have occurred among this people, I " must say, that I have little uncommon to com- " municate. I have mentioned already, that " almost all our converts have been brought to " serious concern and inquiry, in a quiet gra- " dual manner. To an intelligent observer, the " change in the conversation, temper, deport- " ment, and the very countenance of indivi- " duals, is striking; the change, too, on the " general aspect of the manners of the people is " conspicuous. The effect is thus, on the whole, " obvious; yet there are few particulars in the " case of each person, which, taken singly, will " appear uncommon, or worthy of being detail- " ed in a separate narrative. We have no in- " stances of persons remarkable for profligacy of " manners, or profaneness of speech, who have " been reclaimed from such enormities, because " there were none of that description to be " found in our society. The change has been " from ignorance and indifference, and disrelish " of divine things, to knowledge, and concern, " and spiritual enjoyment. Neither are there " among us examples of persons suddenly struck " and impressed by some alarming event, or " singular interposition of Providence. The " word of truth proclaimed in public, or spoken " in private, has been almost the only outward " mean of producing conviction of sin, and con-

" fidence in the Saviour. In every single case, " the power of God is visible in the effect pro- " duced; but there is little " diversity of ope- " ration." Instead of endeavouring to paint " the beauties of holiness in the scene around " me, I rather wish to prevail with you and " other friends, who know how to enjoy such a " spectacle, to " come and see." "

Without making any remark on this interesting statement, we shall insert a few letters written while the great work was going on.

He had met with a severe domestic trial in the loss of Mrs Stewart, who, at the time of Mr Simeon's visit, was affected with the pulmonary disorder that brought her to an early grave. And to shew how a Christian can bear the bereavement of the dearest creature-comforts, we shall insert the letter he wrote to Mr B. announcing her decease :—

Moulin, Feb. 7. 1799.

" Now, my dear brother, have I joyful news " to tell! My Louisa is safely arrived at her " heavenly home. Her passage was remarka- " bly smooth, and her exit speedy. Yesterday " morning her spirit took its departure about " 10 o'clock, and long ere now it is with God " who gave it. Her strength had been declin-

" ing every day,—she could speak but little " and with difficulty,—but her speech was full " of her Saviour's kindness and love to her soul. " Two or three days before her death, she was " threatened with some degree of suffering, from " the feebleness of her frame, but it came no far- " ther. The Lord was pleased to deal most ten- " derly with her and us, for she breathed her " last without a struggle, or a feature discom- " posed.

" But a few years ago, my address to my " friends, and to you, I remember, in particu- " lar, was συγχαρητε μοι, on what we all reckoned a " joyful occasion. Through the grace of God " vouchsafed to my dear partner and myself, I " am enabled from my heart to repeat the same " address. I do not forbid you, my dear friends, " to weep,—it is the expression of many a ten- " der and spiritual emotion,—but I do call on " you not to grieve or mourn for me as for one " without hope. Rather let us praise the Lord, " and exalt his name together, for his many " loving-kindnesses and tender mercies, saying " with Job, " Blessed be the name of the " Lord * !"

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* Mrs Stewart left two children,—Alexander, about to become a preacher, and Catharine, married to the Rev. H. Allan, minister of Kincardine, Ross-shire.

Thus strongly did Mr Stewart enjoy the consolations of Christ in the season of nature's tribulation!

To assuage the grief of his friend for the loss of a loved son, Horace, among other expedients, advises him to divert the mind from the object lost, and fix the attention on the new conquests of Augustus:—

"————————Desine mollium
Tandem querelarum: et potius nova
Cantemus Augusti trophæa
Cæsaris, et rigidum Niphatem
Medumque flumen gentibus additum
Victis, minores volvere vortices:
Intraque præscriptum Gelonos
Exiguis equitare campis."

But if attention to the victories of Cæsar could afford a suitable diversion to the labouring mind, Mr Stewart had a much nobler field of relief presented to him in the conquests of Christ, whose victorious grace was subduing many hearts around him, as the extracts that follow set forth more particularly than was compatible with the plan of his general narrative.

To Mr Black.

Moulin, Oct. 20. 1800.

"O my dear brother, had you but been with "us for a week past, how your heart would

" have rejoiced! Such hungering and thirst-
" ing after communion with God! such genu-
" ine humility and contrition for sin! such de-
" votedness to the Saviour! old converts quick-
" ened, and new ones added to the Lord! Yes-
" terday was, I trust, a great day of the Son of
" man. I almost felt my own nerves, rigid as
" they are, touched, and my sympathy (my ad-
" miration I am sure) excited, in various pri-
" vate conversations which I had during the
" week. Glenbriarachan, which I visited on
" Tuesday, I found blossoming like the rose.
" I had observed, for some months past, a kind
" of concern, a kind of " voluntary humility,"
" appearing among them, rather bordering on
" ostentation; but now their expressions of
" concern and humiliation were fewer, more
" unaffected, and seemed to come more directly
" from the heart. But I must refer to sister's
" journal, as I am called to speak with one of
" our new *evellíes,* (awakened), and our hour
" of worship is not distant. One after the other
" is calling, but I must defer them till after
" worship."

To the same.

" O for the pen of a ready writer to tell of the
" Lord's abundant goodness! One lad in the

" parish of Blair, whom I visited a few days ago,
" and who seems to have walked with God for
" many years, appears to be going home bearing
" ample testimony to the grace of God his Sa-
" viour. Several called here yesterday, hunger-
" ing and thirsting as much as ever. Widow
" M. entered joyfully into her rest. But what
" chiefly engages our praises at present, is the
" case of a Robert R——, tenant in Glenbriar-
" achan, (still a favoured spot). His wife was
" among the first-fruits in the glen; and now the
" husband, laid on a sick-bed, has been visited
" with the joys of salvation, and proclaims the
" freeness and fulness of divine grace. It is a
" singular sight to see his wife, with the near
" prospect of widowhood, and a family of small
" children, his two sisters, brother-in-law, &c.
" all rejoicing by his bed-side. Mrs B. or you,
" I am sure, will not fail to make our dear
" brethren partakers of our joy."

To the same.

" I have to inform you how much we have
" been gratified by a kind visit from Mr ****.
" He preached here the last Sabbath of Decem-
" ber. I had been in the pulpit twice before;
" once to salute my people, and request their
" prayers and thanksgivings in my behalf; and

" another time to baptise a child. The day Mr
" **** preached, I succeeded him, and gave
" briefly in Gaelic the substance of his discourse,
" which had been a long one. He staid here
" Monday. That day, he and I took a walk to
" see John C——, mentioned by sister in her
" last letter to Mrs Black. This man had been
" brought, a few weeks ago, to a clear and com-
" fortable knowledge of the gospel, chiefly by
" means of a young woman, whom he had hired
" for the five weeks of harvest, on purpose to
" enjoy her religious company. About a month
" ago, his wife was in great bodily distress; but
" it was a season of love to her soul. She was
" enlightened with the knowledge of her Sa-
" viour, and enabled to trust and rejoice in
" him. Margaret K——, the young woman
" whose conversation had been blessed to the
" husband, was their constant attendant. The
" wife has been much distressed since her ill-
" ness, and her recovery very doubtful. Mr
" **** and I found her in a very weakly state;
" but both she and her husband were quite re-
" signed and cheerful. Unfortunately, neither
" of them can speak a word of English, so that
" Mr **** had no conversation with them, but
" he was much delighted with the man's ani-
" mated and heavenly countenance. A heavy
" fall of snow, which prevented all intercourse

" for some days, has occasioned our not hearing
" accounts of the woman's health for five days.
" I have had calls from two young women, who
" spent one or two half-years in service in this
" parish. They were in that time awakened, I
" trust effectually, and pretty well instructed in
" the truth. At Martinmas, they quitted their
" service, and returned to their native parish of
" Blair Athole, where they lived in the same
" village, and are mutual aids and comforts to
" each other. They read and converse much
" together, and not seldom bear their testimony
" against the profanity of swearers and Sabbath-
" breakers in their village. Their unusual man-
" ners and sentiments draw upon them many
" taunts, and on the Moulin people, among
" whom they learned such odd notions; but
" they have been enabled to abide stedfast, and
" I hope humble.

" Such things having now, by the peculiar
" blessing of God and his abounding grace, be-
" come pretty frequent, are much talked of.
" They have excited the attention and wonder
" of many, and the diversion and hatred of
" some,—just as might have been expected. I
" hear of few scoffers among ourselves, where
" the behaviour of our young converts is seen
" and known; but I hear they are the subject
" of much obloquy in the neighbouring parishes,

" where, on account of the distance, there is " more room for misrepresenting their senti- " ments and conduct, and where they are gross- " ly misrepresented. Hitherto the Lord has " watched over them most tenderly, so that I " have not heard of one who has fallen off, or " brought a stain on his profession. On the " contrary, those who live nearest to this place, " and whom I know best, appear evidently to be " growing in grace and knowledge. We have " many inquirers after the truth, who are yet " but exploring their way; and some who, from " opposing and reprobating its doctrines, are " brought to listen to them with acquiescence, " at least, if not with a desire to learn. S—— " is attended every day, and almost at all hours, " by persons of every description. She and a " tradesman in this village, W. W——, a Mar- " garet K——, are my principal " helps," 1 Cor. " xii. 28. Expositors would be at no loss to " understand that term, if they were a few " weeks among us.

" What a treasure has been distributed among " us! and in what frail earthen vessels! Truly " the excellency of the power is of God, and " not of us. O that our hearts were more en- " larged, and our tongues more ready, and our " voices more tuned, to praise Him who hath " made the day-spring from on high to visit us!

" But how dry! how barren! I used to give " little credit to the complaints of good men, " such as Mr Newton, when lamenting their " want of love, and their indisposition to la- " bour; but now I give them full credit. I am " sure they said no more than they must have " felt, and I dare say they felt no more than " was real."

Referring to these communications, his correspondent inserted the following reflections in his diary:—

Edinburgh, July 20. 1800.

" Felt a little quickened by a sweet letter " the other day from dear brother Stewart, " containing an account of the wonderful things " that the Lord is carrying on in his parish. " O may the Lord's work still continue and in- " crease exceedingly, that there may be joy in " heaven over more repenting sinners, and that " the thanksgivings of many upon earth may " redound to God on their account! And O " that it would please God to visit all our con- " gregations with the refreshing influence of his " Spirit, that sinners every where may be seen " flying to Christ as clouds, and as doves to " their windows! God of all grace, send a plen- " teous rain!"

When the news of those things had spread abroad, it excited an uncommon interest among all who loved Zion's prosperity. Good men and good ministers could hardly be satisfied without repairing to the scene; and it was after a visit of Mr Black to Moulin, he thus wrote in his diary:—

Aug. 24. 1800.

"Returned from St Madoes, Perth, and Moulin, where I spent the last two weeks, upon the whole, I trust, profitably to my own soul, if not to the souls of others. My visit to Moulin was peculiarly gratifying. Such a revival I never witnessed before,—it is truly the doing of the Lord, and marvellous in our eyes. Much as I had heard of it before, it far exceeded expectation. I preached on Matth. xxii. 42.; the congregation attentive, and some of them much affected. Had a great deal of conversation in private with many of those under religious concern, and considerably under the influence of doubts and fears. They spoke feelingly of the hardness of their hearts, and of their indisposedness for every thing that is good. At the same time, their hearts seemed to be much alive to God. They have a keen appetite for the word of God, and an evident love for the Saviour, though they will not allow it themselves. A deep sense

" of their own unworthiness, and a strong affec-
" tion for one another, are the most prominent
" features in their character. Some are more
" advanced and greatly enlightened in the
" knowledge of divine truth. These serve as
" guides to the rest, and are made exceedingly
" useful by their example and conversation.

" Dear Mr Stewart himself is mercifully pre-
" served humble amidst all the honour that
" God is conferring upon him. O may the
" good Shepherd watch over him, and the dear
" flock committed to his charge! And may
" the divine influence be spread abroad through-
" out all our congregations, that every where
" there may be a shaking among the dry bones,
" and that a great harvest of souls may be
" gathered to the Saviour!"

Sept. 28. 1800.

" Dear brother Stewart spent eight days with
" us, and his company and conversation were
" truly enlivening."

Jan. 18. 1801.

" Amidst the complaints of deadness and un-
" profitableness, two things have done me good,
" —the reading of Mr Pearce's Memoirs, a
" sweet and precious testimony to the power of
" divine grace; and the accounts of the success
" of the gospel at Moulin, communicated from
" time to time by dear brother Stewart."

April 19. 1801.

" Returned from Perth last week, where I " had been assisting in dispensing the Lord's " supper. Had a sweet day on the Sabbath. " Preached on Gen. xxxii. 26. with much com- " fort, and was greatly refreshed next day with " hearing dear brother Stewart on Col. iii. 15."

Sept. 6. 1801.

" After being considerably feverish, and much " weakened, it pleased the Lord mercifully to " restore me, so that, before I went to Moulin, " I enjoyed my usual state of health. I preach- " ed there the following Lord's day, and truly " it did my heart good to see so many friends " of the Lord walking in truth, and in love to " one another."

April 25. 1802.

" Preached at Moulin to brother Stewart's " affectionate and highly-favoured flock. Some " things I heard lately respecting them, gave " me concern, and I was afraid I saw in these " things, (small and inconsiderable as they seem " at present), the beginnings of dissension. But " from conversation, and further inquiring, I " trust my fears will prove groundless. O may " the Lord keep his good hand about his dear " people in that corner, and maintain what he " has wrought."

It is pleasing to contemplate Mr Stewart in the fidelity and in the success that accompanied his public ministry; but, in order to give the reader a more complete idea of his character, it is necessary to exhibit him in some of the more private walks of duty. There were two things that pervaded his ministerial intercourse with his parishioners,—an affectionate desire to benefit them, and the faithful application of the most probable means to do them good. From the day he knew the grace of God in truth, his heart was opened with undissembled love to genuine Christians, and with tender compassion for the condition of men living without hope and without God in the world.

As an instance of his kindly affection to those around him, it may be mentioned, that at the hour of evening worship, a bell rang to give notice to the bordering villagers of the evening sacrifice, when as many as were disengaged and willing-hearted, repaired to the place, and in the kitchen, or in fine weather before the door, listened to the opening up of some passage of scripture, and joined in prayer and praise.

His attention to the cases of the newly awakened was unremitting; and if some trial, or some unlooked-for mercy, exercised the hearts of his more established converts, their minister took a lively interest in the dispensation. The

connection betwixt them was such, as can neither exist nor appear desireable to the merely professional guide and his professed followers, the one teaching a way he neither knows aright nor loves, the other listening to his directions without the least intention to obey them, or to make progress. The one would think Mr Stewart's attention to his flock a miserable bondage; the other would view the affectionate respect and assiduity of his people as the effects of superstition and credulity.

As to the interest which Mr Stewart himself must have felt in the spiritual birth of so many sons and daughters, no man can describe it, but a parent of souls, if we may be allowed the expression. That minister who has beheld none converted by his means,—who, when he looks around his congregation, sees no man that owes his soul to him,—whose faithfulness has perhaps only irritated many, who, when he goes abroad, follow him with eyes that watch for his halting, and treat his name and character without deference, and without sentiments of filial regard;—such an one knows nothing of the endearing attachment that binds together a faithful pastor, who has won their souls to Christ, and a deeply-indebted flock. He may go or return without exciting any other interest than the interest of good neighbourhood among one class, or the

interest that arises from the calculation of probable gain or loss among others more dependent. What a fine picture Mr Stewart draws in some of his letters, when, after an occasional absence, on drawing near to the habitations of his beloved people, now one, and now another, on discovering his approach, hastened to salute him, and to welcome his return! and how interesting must those Sabbaths have been, in which the Son of man shewed his power, and sent forth the gospel-invitation with an influence of grace the called could not resist! No wonder many resorted to such a highly-favoured spot, and that many were anxious to procure to their own congregations the benefit of Mr Stewart's occasional ministrations.

Of Mr Stewart's prudence and spirit, both in the walks of humanity, and in efforts to guard his parishioners from the influence of temptation, the following extract of a letter to Mr Black affords an instance.

After apologizing to his correspondent for not paying a distant visit, he adds:—

"Matters occur almost weekly at home, "which could not be so well done in my ab- "sence. By a concurrence of two or three pro- "vidential circumstances, we have at last got "R———, late schoolmaster at St Madoes,

" elected and settled here, a man who, I hope,
" will prove a valuable acquisition. But if I
" had been from home, and the election defer-
" red, I suspect another might have been intro-
" duced not nearly so proper. A family, or rather
" two families in one house, consisting of a man,
" his wife, a widow lately deprived of her hus-
" band, and not a fortnight delivered of a posthu-
" mous child, with two or three other children,
" were all laid up at once in a fever, without a
" creature to attend them. The neighbours were
" willing to contribute any thing to their sup-
" port, but none would go near them for fear of
" infection. The families of Lude and Urrard
" offered any hire to a woman who would wait
" on the wretched invalids; a woman was found
" who was willing to undertake the unpleasant
" and dangerous charge. But her neighbours,
" and particularly the farmer from whom she
" rented her cottage, threatened her, if she went
" near the infected house, that they would
" turn all her furniture out of doors, and never
" admit her again among them. The mis-
" creants were not of my parish. As soon as I
" was told of these circumstances, (for the peo-
" ple resided in the extremity of this parish), I
" visited the sick family; found the man deli-
" rious, his wife next to insensible, and a cry-
" ing child between them in one bed; in ano-

" ther, the widow with her young infant. Not-
" withstanding the open window, it was diffi-
" cult to remain even a few minutes in the
" apartment. Accompanied by an elder and a
" tenant, I went in quest of the woman proposed
" for a nurse. We expostulated with her land-
" lord, engaged the woman, carried her with us,
" and introduced her to her charge. By the di-
" rection of a surgeon, who had just called, the
" poor invalids were shifted and laid more com-
" fortably in bed. Cordials were administered,
" and I left them quiet. Indeed, I had much
" reason to adore the goodness of the Lord in
" giving me such an opportunity of being use-
" ful, and in prospering the means employed.
" I expect to see the poor creatures again to-
" morrow, as I purpose to preach in the neigh-
" bourhood.

" Another occurrence, last week, called for
" my interference. Some of the young volun-
" teers had planned a ball, and engaged some
" of the lightest girls in the neighbourhood to
" attend. I learned that they were contriving
" among themselves to spend the day abroad,
" and to attend the ball without their parents'
" knowledge. I have thought it my duty uni-
" formly to discourage those foolish revels
" which increase youthful levity, and apply
" artificial heat to ripen the fruits of folly. I re-

" paired first to the woman of the public house
" (her husband died the other winter) where
" the ball was to be kept. She assured me it
" was not agreeable to her, nor done with her
" consent. I then took my elder Mr W——
" with me, and called on every young woman
" in the village. After a few words of intro-
" duction, I asked each, in presence of her fa-
" ther and mother, if she intended to go to the
" ball; taking at the same time my pen and
" ink, and writing the person's name and an-
" swer I received. Every one answered me
" without hesitation, that she was not to go.
" I then made her give me her promise in the
" presence of her parents and the elder, that she
" would not go. This they all readily did, and
" I wrote it down. This was on the morning
" of the day appointed for the dance. The lads
" were abroad at drill. I called on two or three
" of them in the afternoon, and remonstrated
" with them. The result was, that there was
" no ball. It would have been extremely rash
" to set about any measure of this kind, with-
" out asking special direction from God. I trust
" I was directed. People learn soon to disre-
" gard admonitions from the pulpit, if they are
" not followed up in some way that shews the
" monitor to be in earnest, and concerned in
" the counsel he gives."

It may be proper, in this place, to advert to the manner in which he acted in his ministerial capacity towards a class of his parishioners, with which, in general, it is very difficult to deal faithfully, without provoking an enmity that may obstruct one's usefulness to his people in matters of secular and public concern. It is *Heritors* we mean, who, when openly irreligious, are not likely to strengthen a serious minister's hands in the work of his office. This it were unreasonable to expect; nor has any man just cause to complain of not finding it so. But what affords a ground of reasonable complaint in such cases is, that if they nominally belong to the Established Church, they judge themselves exempt from all jurisdiction as to religious character, and resent the refusal of privileges as a personal injury.

As soon as Mr Stewart had right views of the spiritual nature of the sacraments of the church, he became solicitous to see suitable character in those to whom they were administered. This led him to exercise much strictness in the examination of candidates for communion at the Lord's table; nor was he more negligent in the matter of *baptism*, not respecting the persons of poor or rich, when the glory of his Master, and the right administration of his ordinances, were concerned.

One of his heritors having the prospect of a family, and seeming to entertain no doubts of his qualifications for standing sponsor to his child, Mr Stewart, who had different views of his character and competency, anticipating the occasion, wrote him the following letter :—

" It must give pleasure to all your friends " to find, that Mrs ——— is likely to bring an " addition to your family, and to continue the " line of your forefathers, who have been so " much respected in the country in which they " lived. My sincere wish is, that she may be " preserved to be the happy mother of a thriv- " ing child. It is a serious matter to become " a parent, to have an immortal soul committed " to your care and keeping, to be trained up in " the knowledge and service of God. If it be " his will to bring your child alive and safe into " the world, you will of course choose to have " him baptised, according to the universal cus- " tom of our country. Permit me, my dear " Sir, to remind you that this is a most solemn " religious service; that a person ought never " to go about it for the sake of custom, or fa- " shion, but in order to please God, who has " appointed it. At the same time, we cannot " expect to please him in this service, unless we " do it with proper views, and in a proper spirit.

" This implies, that we have a distinct know-
" ledge of the several articles of the Christian
" religion to which baptism has a direct refer-
" ence, and that we feel their influence in our
" hearts. Allow me, then, to suggest to your
" own consideration, how highly requisite it is
" that you should apply your mind seriously to
" this important subject, before you engage in
" such a solemn transaction between God and
" your soul. I wish with all my heart I could
" be any way assisting to you in this inquiry.
" Shall I write more fully on the subject? Shall
" I send you any books? Or will you give me
" leave to call upon you at ———, with the de-
" sign of conversing about the things that are
" revealed in scripture? Indeed it is no vain
" or idle matter, but much the reverse; and it
" is especially necessary to be in earnest con-
" cerned about religion, when one has the pro-
" spect of engaging in such a solemn service as
" devoting his child to Christ in baptism, lest,
" for want of attention and knowledge, he
" should be found to deal falsely with the
" great God, who knows the heart.

" I hope I need make no apology for the
" freedom of this address, as I am sure it is
" prompted by the truest friendship; and I can-
" not suppose that you will take amiss what
" proceeds from the best intention.

" It would give me the highest pleasure to " know that it had obtained your serious atten- " tion, and that of Mrs ——— also, for each " of you has a soul that will exist for ever, and " you are both equally concerned in the wel- " fare of your offspring."

This letter being well received, and a willingness to receive instruction expressed, Mr Stewart, on the birth of his child, addressed him once more; and, after compliments and inquiries, wrote:—

" My anxiety for your best interests, induces " me to send you the Form of Baptism which " I always use, in hopes that you will take the " trouble to read it with attention. You will " find shortly mentioned in it those peculiar " doctrines of our religion, which every person " who partakes of either of our sacraments pro- " fesses to believe, and which, therefore, he " would need to have studied thoroughly. You " may compare it with the doctrines asserted, " and the duties inculcated, in the office of " baptism laid down in the Book of Common " Prayer of the Church of England. You " must judge, after considering the inclosed pa- " per, whether you can faithfully and explicitly " make the declarations and promises contained

" in it. In a solemn transaction like this, a " person would need to be sure of what he says, " and what he promises. It is not enough for " a man to go through a form, and satisfy him- " self that he has done like others. If others " go through the same form, without sufficient- " ly considering what they are about, that may " be partly their own fault, partly that of their " teachers, but their neglect cannot excuse us. " Be assured, my dear Sir, in one word, that " unless you be yourself renewed by the Spirit " of God, and heartily devoted to Christ, you " cannot devote your child to him in baptism " with that sincerity, and faith, and cordiality, " which will make it an acceptable service to " God. And if it be not an acceptable service " to him, it were better not done at all. I wish " and pray God, that these things may obtain " your most serious consideration."

This was an instance of ministerial faithfulness, which it is worth while to record, and it may be proposed as a pattern to others in like circumstances, who, from want of similar spirit, cannot bring themselves to deal conscientiously with persons of superior rank, and thus do violence to their own judgments, and lose opportunities for benefiting those whom they want resolution either to admonish or to instruct.

That none, however, may be surprised, if in some cases of this nature, disappointment be the result, we shall mention that Mr Stewart, with all his address, and fidelity, and acknowledged *purity of design*, did not always succeed in his endeavours. For, to another of his heritors, having written in the following terms:—

"While your friends and neighbours are "all making kind inquiries about your health, "which has been so poorly of late, may I be "allowed to step forward among the rest, to "express my anxious concern on your own ac- "count, and also on account of your dear lady, "who must be painfully affected by your pre- "sent indisposition. But indeed I come not to "amuse or to flatter, but in a serious way to "wish you well. It is a wish I strongly feel, "but it is not confined to your bodily health, "or your prosperity in the world. My wishes, "believe me, extend much farther,—to a state "of existence beyond the present. Perhaps an "absence from the cares and objects which re- "quire so much of your attention at home, "may allow you some leisure to extend your "views in the same direction. And when your "journey is taken in quest of health, which the "blessing of God alone can give, it is a fit sea- "son to apply to him for a still higher blessing,

" which he alone can bestow also. I doubt not
" that you will get the best medical advice, and
" I do wish and pray that it may be of benefit
" to your health. But where, my dear Sir,
" shall we find the physician who will prescribe
" for your soul? or will you be prevailed on to
" follow the prescription? That your soul is dis-
" eased, sick unto death, and in danger of pe-
" rishing, there cannot be a doubt, if God
" speaks true; and that there is but one reme-
" dy, and that an infallible one, is equally true.
" My fear is, and what induces me to write,
" that you do not suspect your danger, nor know
" your remedy. I wish I could think there was
" room to me to be mistaken,—I wish I may
" hereafter find reason to form a different opi-
" nion,—what joy would it give me! But, with
" regard to the present state of your soul, I
" cannot help saying that my fears greatly pre-
" dominate. Consider, dear Sir, have you ever
" studied the word of God as the rule of faith
" and practice? and are you sure you do believe
" it, and that your life has been conformed to it?
" or have you considered it as the standard by
" which we must all be tried and judged? and
" are you prepared to stand such a trial? Un-
" less an invalid *take* the medicine prescribed,
" it can be of no benefit to him. So, unless
" you understand, and approve, and apply to

" your own case, the doctrine of the gospel con-
" cerning the salvation of sinners, Christ's sal-
" vation can be of no benefit to you. I will
" pursue this no farther, but only to take the
" liberty of urging the strong necessity of in-
" quiring and attending to these most impor-
" tant objects, while life and ability are given;
" especially when Divine Providence is remind-
" ing you that life is uncertain, and eternity
" approaching. It is possible you may not be
" provided with proper helps. There are many
" fashionable sermons, which contain many
" good and useful things, but which do not ex-
" plicitly declare the way of salvation, nor teach
" the knowledge of Jesus Christ. I wish I
" knew how I could be useful to you in this
" way. The inclosed letter came lately in my
" way, I think it worthy of more than one se-
" rious perusal. Let me now, my dear Sir,
" wish you a safe journey, that your health may
" be restored and prolonged; but, above all,
" that you may *know*, and *love*, and *serve* the
" blessed Redeemer, and through him obtain
" eternal life and happiness. That you and
" Mrs ——— may be joint partakers of this
" blessedness, is the sincere prayer of," &c.

The answer contained little more than a re-

quest, that Mr Stewart will in future give his advice when asked *only*.

Previous to the above correspondence, the same gentleman had sent Mr Stewart notice to " be at ——— on Friday at half past five " o'clock, to perform the ceremony of giving a " name to his son." Mr Stewart having sent word, that " on such a solemn occasion as that " of devoting a child to Christ in baptism, it " was requisite to have some previous conver- " sation concerning the principles of the Chris- " tian religion, which a parent ought to know " and believe, and the religious duties which he " ought to practise, before he can with sincerity " make the professions, and come under the " engagements, which are required in dispens- " ing that sacred ordinance;" the following was the laconic reply; " Mr and Mrs ——— do not " require Mr Stewart to attend at ——— this " evening."

Mr Stewart's heritors had concurred with him in various expedients of his proposal for effecting reformation in the parish, being satisfied of the reasonableness of his plans, and of the wisdom of supporting him in carrying them into effect for the common good. Among other abuses which he aimed to have corrected, he made an attempt to abolish Sunday proclamations, rela-

tive to sales and other secular business, of which, in many parishes, it is still customary to give audible notice in the church-yard, by the beadle as a public crier, immediately on the congregation being dismissed. This palpable relic of the barbarous age of Popery, during the full sway of which, the Sunday was a busy day among pedlars and chapmen, in places distant from market towns, who exposed their wares in the church-yard, it is high time to interdict; for what more unseemly, than to come directly from the publication of salvation, to be informed of what is to be sold throughout the district in the progress of the week.

In most parishes, however, the crier's proclamation has given place to advertisements, often placarded on the very walls of the church, the resort to which is a painful sight to one that cares for the sanctity of the place and day; while so little respect is paid to the Lord's day and service by the public authorities, that sometimes, on our pronouncing the valedictory blessing on the congregation, the sound has hardly ceased to vibrate on the serious ear, when every feeling of duty and propriety is outraged, by the sudden eruption, from the precentor's desk, of an official mandate to pay taxes, under penalty, at time and place prescribed.

The laws of our country we respect, but we cannot approve their spirit and tendency, when they bear on the practical abrogation of the law of God. Surely other expedients might be devised for giving notoriety to public or to private transactions of a secular interest, without encroaching on times set apart for higher concerns, and without lessening the sanctity of a day, the contempt of which has a most demoralizing influence on society.

In Moulin, the old practice of intimating the public business of the week at the parish church-door was in use. Aware of its inconsistency with the proper business of the day, Mr Stewart, who, it seems, had not the power to suppress it himself, addressed the resident heritors on the subject in the following circular:—

"I beg leave to request your attention to a "subject which has for a considerable time en-"gaged my thoughts.

"It is evident that by the establishment of "Sunday schools, under the patronage of the "heritors, and by discontinuing the practice of "drinking on Sunday after marriages, christen-"ings, and funerals, the morals of the people "have been, at least in some measure, improv-"ed, and the profanation of the Lord's day

" has been in many instances prevented. A " strict observance of the Sabbath has ever been " found closely connected with the interests of " religion and morality. It is an important " point to preserve a sacred regard to the " Lord's day, whether we respect the good of " the people, or the authority of Him who in- " stituted the Sabbath, and commanded us to " keep it holy. Now, it appears to me that " there is one practice still prevalent among us, " which is a direct breach of the Sabbath, and " I wish much to have the countenance and " assistance of the gentlemen of the parish to " get it abolished. The practice I mean is that " of making proclamations on Sunday relative " to country business, &c. This is as contrary " to the religious observance of that day as " transacting secular affairs, which, you know, " is expressly prohibited. At the same time, " however, that I earnestly wish this unlawful " custom to be set aside, I would like to have " some other expedient proposed to be adopted " in its stead. Suppose that some public con- " spicuous place were appointed, on which ad- " vertisements might be posted, either in Mou- " lin or Pitlochry, or both; and that the " church officer should have the charge of tak- " ing in advertisements, posting them up, and

" preserving them from damage, every day ex-
" cept Sunday. The number of persons who
" can read and write is now such, that the con-
" tents of these advertisements would be easily
" known, and soon spread over the country.
" When once this method was established, it
" would become customary for every person
" who passed through the village, to inquire
" if there was any thing new on the advertis-
" ing post; and would have this advantage,
" that an intimation could be made at any time
" of the week, without waiting the return of
" Sunday.

" Particular cases may indeed occur, especial-
" ly in what relates to the defence of the coun-
" try, in which it may be warrantable not only
" to make public notifications, but even to arm,
" to march, and to fight on Sunday. I would
" have no scruple to stop in the middle of a
" sermon, in order to make an intimation of
" that kind. I speak at present only of procla-
" mations relative to common affairs, and secu-
" lar business.

" As to the practicability of carrying on
" country business without Sunday proclama-
" tions, I know country parishes where the
" practice has been long unknown. And I
" know, that in our own parish, roups have been
" made, and sufficiently well attended, which

" never were notified by proclamation ; and that " some tenants and others, for upwards of two " years past, have never caused a proclamation " to be made on Sunday, on any account what- " ever.

" I have thought it best, Sir, to submit these " things to your consideration by letter, that " you may have time to attend leisurely to the " subject on which I have taken the liberty of " addressing you. If the matter strikes you as " it does me, I hope you will approve of making " the experiment how the proposed substitute " of written advertisements, instead of procla- " mation, will answer. Or if any better mode " occur to you, or to any other heritor, I shall " be happy to receive your instructions about it, " and to join with you in recommending and " carrying it into effect."

After two months deliberation on this memorial, the heritors to whom it was submitted sent word to Mr Stewart, " We all concur in " one sentiment, that proclamations shall con- " tinue to be made in the same manner as at " present."

During the greater part of Mr Stewart's continuance at Moulin, his country, in common with the rest of Europe, felt the vast shock which almost the whole civilized world receiv-

ed, from the revolutionary phrenzy that so long agitated France. And it is proper to remark, that he was by no means an unconcerned spectator of passing events. Indeed, it appears from his correspondence with Mr Black, that both these individuals watched the varying aspects of Providence towards the nations of Europe, with a pious and most ardent observation.

Let it not be thought, however, they so far forgot their calling as to become immersed in the political theories of the day. Their Lord's kingdom is not of this world,—a fact too little adverted to by many among the professed subjects of his grace, who plunge into political discussion with intemperate zeal. Mr Stewart formed his *political* principles on the spirit and precept of the gospel institute; and he who brings an unbiassed mind to the subject, with the New Testament before him, will seldom be at a loss what line of conduct to adopt and to pursue. In what a serious light Mr Stewart viewed national providences, and the relation that subsists between rulers and subjects, will appear from the following extract of a letter written in 1803.

" For some weeks past, I have been assailed " with a trial rather new to me. I have thought " it my duty, since the commencement of the

" present war, to try occasionally to explain to
" my people the circumstances of the country,
" and the object of calling out the people to take
" arms, &c. I was happily successful, and my
" services proved highly gratifying to the gen-
" try. They were not backward to acknowledge
" this. After consulting with his brother offi-
" cers, Colonel B——— wrote me a letter bear-
" ing very ample testimony to my patriotic ex-
" ertions, and offering me the appointment of
" Chaplain to the Athole Regiment of Volun-
" teers, under his command. This I did not
" hesitate to accept. It gave me access, *ex of-*
" *ficio*, to all the men of the several companies,
" to give them advice without being chargeable
" with officiousness. All this, however, I found
" a snare. Even in doing what I thought be-
" came me to do, I ever found motives of vani-
" ty mixing with those of duty. The people,
" too, were ready to ascribe much of what I
" said to an undue compliance with the wishes
" of the gentry. From this suspicious situa-
" tion, I was in a good measure relieved by a
" compliment I did not expect. On the very
" evening before the public fast, I received a
" card, written in the name of Colonel ———
" and the other officers, inviting Mrs Stewart
" and me to a ball and supper at the next inn,
" on the following Tuesday. This appeared so

" very unsuitable and unseasonable an enter-
" tainment, at such a juncture, that I animad-
" verted in my fast-day sermon on all manner
" of levity, as a disregard of the Divine re-
" buke, and introduced Isaiah xxii. 12—14.
" And as it was necessary to answer the card
" of invitation, I wrote a letter to Colonel
" ———, stating my views pretty freely. I
" really found it a relief to have something to
" do in the line of duty, that did not flatter
" the inclinations of carnal men. The day of
" the said ball was to be a field-day with our
" corps. I thought it my duty to appear on
" the parade. The Colonel took civil notice of
" me as usual, and asked me to take my sta-
" tion along with the officer on the right of the
" line, in saluting the General. This was the
" whole of my exhibition, and when the exer-
" cise was over, I came home. I hope I have
" been divinely guided in this matter, for how-
" ever my mind may have wavered, and my
" motives been greatly mixed with carnal and
" selfish views, yet I do not yet see that my
" outward conduct has been improper."

Whether Mr Stewart, or those light-hearted warriors, were the better friends of their country, and which of them exhibited most of patriotism in their views, it is not difficult, on

the principles of Christianity, to decide. On the eve of a public Fast, to appoint a ball, was a bold challenge to public opinion; but to invite to their assembly a man of Mr Stewart's known sanctity of habit, and the uniform reprover of such levities, was surely carrying complaisance to an extraordinary height.

Mr Stewart had accepted the military chaplaincy, which was without emolument, in order to be useful to the men composing the Volunteer Battalion, being always intent on means for advancing the interests of his Lord. An address he delivered in this new capacity was afterwards published, and could not fail to be read with much interest at the time, as it was written on the supposition, then very prevalent, that an actual invasion would be attempted, and contained precepts adapted to such an emergency, not overlooking the aspect of Providence, nor forgetting to warn every man to flee from the wrath to come. But it is enough just to advert to these matters, in order to exhibit Mr Stewart's character as it bore on the civil government of his country, and to shew how far he stood removed, on the one side, from servile unchristian compliances with the prejudices of the high or low, and on the other, from unchristian indifference to the po-

litical circumstances of his country, or an hostility to the powers that be *.

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* In this Address, after proving the lawfulness of defensive war, and vindicating the power of the magistrate to call forth sufficient means for repelling aggression, he adds:— "We go on sure ground, while we thus see that we have "the command of God to authorise us to take up arms at "the call of our rulers, to defend our civil rights against "an assailing enemy. It is with the highest satisfaction, "my friends, I observe that you have undertaken this important duty, with an alacrity and cheerfulness which do "credit to yourselves, and to your country. While most "of the French troops have been dragged like slaves to the "camp, and compelled to follow a standard which they detested, to feed the insatiable ambition of a tyrant; you "rise to oppose lawless depredation, and *voluntarily* flock to "the standard of your Landlords, to guard from brutal outrage your Sovereign, your Country, and your Homes. The "name of VOLUNTEERS, with which you are dignified, testifies to the public the readiness and good-will with which "you stepped forward to occupy the post assigned you.

"In this kind of military service, there is no room for "jealousy between gentry and common people. We know "how ready some persons of pretended wisdom are, to fill "your heads with suspicions of the gentry, as if they always rolled the burden off themselves on your shoulders, "and exposed you to toil and danger, while they saved "themselves. In the present case, it is plainly the reverse. "The gentry take an equal share of the toil, and more than "a double share of the danger; for it is well known, that "an enemy would wish rather to kill one officer, or take "him prisoner, than six privates.'

As a minister of an ecclesiastical establishment, it concerns us more to put the reader in possession of his sentiments and views on the religious polity to which he was attached. He entered the church under the auspices of the moderate party, as it is called, some of whom, and particularly Professor G. Hill, afterwards so well known in church courts, interested themselves in procuring his settlement at Moulin. With Dr Hill he appears to have been in habits of intimacy at the time of his ordination; and, with the exception of his correspondence with Mr Black, his intercourse lay wholly with men of moderate principles, prior to his own decided change of heart. Then, as was to be expected, he ranged himself under other banners, and without the least tincture of bad feelings towards his former associates, passed over to men of congenial ardour in the cause of Christ. We have seen how earnestly he sought the acquaintance of evangelical ministers in the city; and with those around him, or within a visiting distance, he cultivated the closest relations of brotherly love *.

* Among these may be particularly mentioned, the late Mr Scott of Perth, and Mr Willison of Forgandenny, as much esteemed by Mr Stewart, and deservedly dear to him.

In the business of church courts, he was the farthest possible from affecting to lead; and though he had diligently studied the laws and constitution of the Established Church,—and from his uniform self-possession, and ready copiousness of elocution, and power of argument, few were better qualified to make a figure in ecclesiastical causes,—he does not seem, during his settlement at Moulin, to have taken a prominent place in any court, supreme or subordinate.

There was one part of his conduct at Moulin which tried the forbearance of his moderate copresbyters, and which some of his warmest friends thought needed to be excused. About the period of his decidedly embracing the truth, a great impulse had been given to the Christian community by the spirit of zeal which burst forth in the south, and which bore down before it the mounds which party names and prejudices had erected, to mark the peculiarities of their own narrow grounds of distinction. All men who held the essential truth, awakened with surprise to a conviction of their past supineness and inactivity, and looking abroad on the vast extent of the unchristianized world, (feeling alive at the same time to the obligations of duty, to seek the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, and the salvation of perishing mankind), wide

and generous combinations were formed, for calling into action the general resources of the well-disposed of all denominations. The formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society will be a monument to after ages, both of the wisdom and the zeal then abroad in the Christian community of England.

But what had given the most sensible impulse to the Christian feeling in Scotland, was the formation of the London Missionary Society, which, comprehending in its general plan Christians of every denomination, irrespective of lesser differences, or external modes of worship, opened a channel of exertion to the zeal of all.

Evangelical ministers of the Church of Scotland hailed the institution, and gave it their utmost support. The flame of zeal which had been kindled for foreign missions, lighted on laymen as well as on the clergy; and home missions were undertaken, which at first were carried on by pious laymen. In a little time it appeared that some ministers in the church, feeling themselves straitened by the constitution, or actual regimen of the national establishment, had begun to think such establishments at variance with the fundamental rights of Christian men, united in the fellowship of the gospel; and several withdrew themselves on the ground of the unlawfulness or inexpediency of national

churches, which owe their establishment and support to the civil power, and which they scrupled not to denominate branches of the mystical Babylon. These having gradually receded from connection with the Establishment, had places of worship erected in the principal towns, and formed societies on the principles of those called Independents. As Mr Stewart was on friendly terms with some of those who took the lead in separating from the Establishment, he continued to maintain his former Christian intercourse; and as lay-preaching was extensively practised among them, and their missionaries spread themselves over the country, he often came in contact with their agents.

Probably some of them thought no minister, who himself knew the truth, and walked uprightly, could conscientiously remain in communion with the national church; and some expectations were perhaps entertained of Mr Stewart's secession; at least, attempts to shake his principles in the article of national churches, were not wanting.

"I had a very kind letter," says he, "from "your neighbour ———, which drew from "me an answer of some length. He is such a "good man that I cannot behave shyly towards "him; yet I am almost afraid of being entan-"gled in a correspondence with him. My dear

" brother ——— too, would not care to draw " me into a friendly debate about the shackles " of establishments, and the freedom and advan- " tage of independence. He wrote me a few " weeks ago, applying roundly to myself a text " on which he had heard me preach at Dundee, " " Loose him and let him go." I answered " him in such a decided manner, that I suppose " he will hardly think of resuming the subject."

In another letter he writes:

" Mr S. cautions me not to encourage " ——— too much. It is right. It is impos- " sible to go all lengths with ———. I must " stop short somewhere, and then he will be as " much hurt as if I had yielded nothing.

" I could find in my heart to write on con- " fessions, as it is a subject on which my mind " is quite clear and settled, and on which a deal " of stark nonsense has been said, which is not " worth combating, but the effects of which " might be easily obviated by a plain statement " of the end and use of confessions."

Situated as Mr Stewart was, amid a people called under his ministry, and among whom he had every facility to preach the gospel, and to exercise discipline to the utmost desireable extent, one would be at a loss to find out a justi-

fiable reason for throwing up his pastoral charge; yet it seems others wondered at his blindness, in not seeing it unlawful to maintain the station he held, and seemed to construe his civilities to their agents, into a proof of his disaffection for the church. Even some of his friends were alarmed at the countenance he gave to the itinerants; and though less interest now attaches to the discussion, yet amid the activity of conflicting sects, as others may be placed in circumstances not very dissimilar from his, it may be useful to hear one, who had much of the mind of Christ, explain the principles on which he acted, as they are stated in a letter written to one of his brethren of the presbytery. This letter is worthy of preservation, for other reasons than any connected with the question of lay preaching.

" If I could have accepted your kind invi-
" tation, and staid at D——— last Tuesday
" night, I should have wished for a half-hour's
" conversation with you about the itinerating
" missionaries. If you will have patience to
" read a long letter, I shall endeavour to state
" now, what I would have said then. I have
" long been desirous to explain myself on this
" subject, wherever I thought I might not be
" misunderstood, especially to you, in whose
" candour I have the fullest confidence, and

" from whom I have experienced much kind-
" ness, and unwearied civility. I cannot but
" regret, that the peculiar circumstances in
" which I have been placed, have given oc-
" casion to any person to hold me up as a con-
" trast to the neighbouring clergymen, and
" made me almost an eye-sore to my brethren.
" Indeed, I have, for a considerable time past,
" reckoned myself much indebted to the for-
" bearance and delicacy of my co-presbyters, in
" not taking me roundly to task, for giving
" such countenance to men whom they con-
" sidered as actuated by the most unfriendly
" intentions. Perhaps I am not far mistaken
" in supposing, that you, in particular, may
" have incurred reprehension from some of
" your acquaintance, for continuing to treat as
" a friend and intimate, one who had become
" such an apostate. I assure you, my dear
" Sir, I feel my obligations to you on this ac-
" count.

" I think I hinted to you some time ago,
" that it is not many years since I came to un-
" derstand what are the peculiar doctrines of
" our religion. My views of Christianity were
" till then very imperfect and confused, and
" my apprehensions of the importance of its
" doctrines were proportionally obscure. I had
" no solicitude about my own, or my people's

" eternal state. A certain constitutional mild-
" ness of disposition recommended me to their
" esteem, but neither they nor I had discern-
" ment to perceive that I was doing them no
" good. In these respects, my mind did cer-
" tainly undergo a very material change. It
" was accompanied neither with melancholy
" nor with extacy, but I understood and per-
" ceived things which I had not understood or
" perceived before. It was then first I saw the
" vast importance of the ministerial work, and
" felt an anxiety about the spiritual concerns of
" my people. This took place before I had
" seen Mr ———, or any of his present as-
" sociates. The more important the truths of
" Christianity appeared to myself, I became the
" more desirous to have them explained and
" inculcated on others. Both the matter and
" the manner of my instructions were changed,
" in private as well as in public. I believe the
" bulk of my parishioners soon observed this;
" but it was some time before they went along
" with me. By degrees, however, many of them
" became more or less acquainted with the doc-
" trines which they heard from me, and were
" impressed with them accordingly. By this
" time I had formed a personal intimacy with
" Mr ———. A similarity of views and feel-
" ings on the most interesting of all subjects,

" strengthened that intimacy. When he came
" here, I knew that his exhortations on religi-
" ous subjects would be such as I could recom-
" mend to my people; and I judged that a per-
" tinent address from a stranger could not fail
" to excite attention, and would probably make
" a lasting impression. Sensible how very ina-
" dequate my individual labours were to the
" work assigned me, I was willing to avail my-
" self of this occasional aid. My people per-
" ceived at once the striking coincidence be-
" tween what they heard from the stranger,
" and what they heard from their minister.
" They judged that both were much in earnest,
" and seriously concerned for the souls of their
" hearers. They had already remarked that
" this manner of preaching was essentially dif-
" ferent from what they had been accustomed
" to hear from me during seven or eight years
" of my ministry. This coincidence in doctrine
" and manner of instruction between me and
" the itinerants who occasionally passed this
" way, served to recommend both parties to the
" esteem of my people,—I speak of the majori-
" ty of the people only; for I believe there are
" some among them who dislike me and my
" preaching, as much as they do the itinerants.
" I have the fullest reason to believe that none
" of these itinerants have spoken any thing in

" this parish but what was agreeable to sound
" doctrine, and free of every tendency towards
" sedition or disaffection.

" I have neither sagacity nor address for a
" politician; but I believe, that in countenanc-
" ing these missionaries, so far as I have done,
" from much better motives than political ones,
" I have just done what good policy would have
" suggested. These men would have assembled
" the people, and would have been listened to
" whether I pleased or not. Had I kept aloof,
" and shewed them no countenance, while they
" spake nothing but what was useful and ac-
" ceptable to the people, my people would have
" become jealous of me, and suspected me of
" partiality and hypocrisy. But now, by hav-
" ing shewed my approbation of what appeared
" good in these men, (and we have seen nothing
" else), my people are the more disposed to
" give me credit, if I should hereafter find oc-
" casion to warn them against individuals who
" may appear to me suspicious. I have not
" failed repeatedly to caution them in general
" against giving themselves up to the guidance
" of strangers, who may come, just like these
" itinerants, with the Bible in their hands, and
" the scripture in their mouths, and yet may
" really be impostors. And, on the same prin-
" ciple, I have always vindicated our landed

" gentlemen, for keeping a watchful eye over " strangers, who come about in such a question- " able shape.

" As these men have excited much attention, " and are " every where spoken against," it will " of course happen, that much more is said a- " gainst them than is true. This makes me " very slow in giving credit to the many un- " favourable reports that I hear about them. " Their leaders are suspected of the most mis- " chievous designs. Of this I have seen no " evidence; and so long as it is only matter of " conjecture and opinion, I must say that my " opinion is widely different, and that all they " have actually done, setting aside exaggerated " reports, and unsubstantiated charges, appears " to me sufficiently accounted for, by the motives " and objects which they have avowed. It was " necessary to state this as my opinion explicit- " ly, else you must have thought me shame- " fully inconsistent, if I continued to keep any " correspondence with these men, while I con- " curred in opinion with those who think them " the enemies of their country, and of their " species. It is possible, indeed, I may be mis- " taken, and, when well authenticated facts " shall shew it, (for while so many mouths are " opened, I can give little credit to flying re- " port), I think I shall be as ready to believe

" solid evidence, and acknowledge my mistake,
" as another.

" I wish every one who concerns himself any
" way about me, and you, my good friend, in
" particular, to be assured, that I am most cor-
" dially attached to the Church of Scotland,—
" to her faith, worship, &c.; nor would any
" earthly bribe, as I think, induce me at pre-
" sent to desert her. I am likewise convinced,
" that if we, her clergy, possessing the many
" advantages we do possess, were in general as
" enlightened, and faithful, and zealous, as many
" of our predecessors, no sectaries could run a-
" way with her people, nor any way endanger
" her prosperity. But I well know what a lame
" support I should have proved to the church a
" few years ago, and how little the personal at-
" tachment of my people, and my skill or in-
" fluence, would have availed to keep them
" from deserting me and my temple, and fol-
" lowing to the field sectaries who should have
" at that time introduced among them the vital
" truths of Christianity. And I have no doubt
" that a defection in favour of the Itinerants
" would have taken place here before now, if it
" had not been providentially ordered that I my-
" self first taught these truths, and that my
" people heard them from me, before they heard
" them from strangers. Convinced of the need

" there is for my labouring more incessantly a-
" mong my people than I had been accustomed
" to do, I have endeavoured to take a lesson of
" diligence from these Itinerants, and to obtain
" a portion of their zeal. And if I am enabled
" to labour with fidelity, and if I succeed in
" teaching my people true religion, I am sure
" I shall have done more to keep them united
" together, and attached to the church, than by
" inveighing against men in whom they have
" seen no evil.

" *Me voila*, as the French say, I have surely
" laid my case and sentiments before you. I
" was anxious to do it, partly that I might not
" appear worse than I am in the estimation of
" a brother, on whose good opinion I really put
" a high value, and partly to guard against any
" misunderstanding which might arise from the
" casual interference of our parishioners, or from
" the officious commendations of Itinerants, or
" others. I have told honestly the grounds of
" that favour which I seem to have shewn to
" the society for propagation of the gospel at
" home, and of which their missionaries seem to
" have vaunted in this part of the country.
" The incidental agreement, if it may be called
" incidental, between me and the missionaries
" of that society, in religious doctrine, in the
" object we both profess to pursue, and in our

" method of pursuing it, together with my
" known intimacy with some of its members,
" may have induced a persuasion that I am
" connected with the society, and an abettor of
" all its measures. This is a mistake. I have
" no connection with that society,—I know but
" few of its members,—my favour, so far as a
" little civility went, was shewn only to two or
" three of its individuals, and that on the
" ground of their being Christian brethren, who
" laid themselves out, according to their ability,
" to press on the attention of all sorts of people
" the leading doctrines of Christianity,—a la-
" bour which appeared to me by no means su-
" perfluous or unnecessary, as I thought, and
" still think, these doctrines are in general little
" attended to or understood."

But while Mr Stewart vindicated his conduct with respect to the Itinerant teachers, he was far from being indifferent as to what opinions his flock should form on the minor points of church order.

" I happened to call one day," says he, " on ——.
" She told me she had a book that was sent her
" to read, but she was half afraid to tell me what
" it was. She did tell me, however, that it
" was Letters by ——, that she had read but

" little of it, and that she did not like to read
" more, for it only made her unsettled and un-
" easy. I said I had no doubt of Mr —— s
" sincerity and good intention in what he had
" done and written, but that there were many
" men of the first eminence for piety and use-
" fulness, who were as decided in holding a dif-
" ferent opinion from Mr ——, and adhering
" to the Church of Scotland. I named Boston,
" Willison, Rutherford, and others, whose cha-
" racter and writings she was acquainted with.
" She said, " I wonder what way Mr Newton
" is of?" I told her, to her great surprise, that
" Mr Newton was of a different way from them
" all, and that he had examined, leisurely and
" deeply, all the ways of them, and made a most
" deliberate choice, and that he had never seen
" reason to repent or regret the choice he had
" made. When I came home, I looked out and
" marked several parts of Mr Newton's Apolo-
" gia, which I carried to ——, and read to her.
" She acknowledged, with much thankfulness,
" that she had heard nothing which so perfectly
" satisfied and composed her mind."

It is no new thing for such men as Mr Stewart to be stigmatized as enemies to the church to which they belong, though, like him, they cordially embrace the original principles of her po-

lity, and act according to the spirit and the tenor of her fundamental laws. Those laws had his deliberate approval; the manner, however, in which they were administered frequently met with his undissembled reprobation. The enactment which prohibited the employment of such a man as Mr Simeon, to whose ministry he was indebted for his own soul, could hardly commend itself to his enlightened judgment; as it went to preclude the possibility of any other deriving a similar benefit in the same way. And some of the measures devised about that time, to strengthen the guards and fences of the church, he thought, had an obvious tendency to expose her weakness, and lay her more open to assault.

But in his happy retirement from the metropolitan arena of discussion and of contest, he never entered into consultation with a calculating and a worldly prudence, how far Christian love should be shewn to those who loved Christ, and who, though on somewhat different views, sincerely sought the conversion of souls, and the glory of God. His heart and his house were open to them, and he had no mean jealousy lest their success should eclipse the lustre of his own; and though the zeal of many of those men was soon diverted into a variety of little channels, that narrowed into straiter charity as they ran;

it must be confessed, that impressions were then made on a number of careless people, with a name to live, the effects of which, doubtless, caused joy in heaven, and afforded new incentives to praise him, who worketh according to the counsel of his own will.

Whatever approbation may be yielded to the motives and the zeal of the Itinerants, however, it is difficult to assign a reason for their activity at Moulin, where such a labourer as Mr Stewart was already in full employment, and while so many places were confessedly in greater need of evangelical cultivation. He seems to have acted on a different principle, who said, "Yea, so "have I strived to preach the gospel, not where "Christ was named, lest I should build upon "another man's foundation. But, as it is writ-"ten, To whom he was not spoken of, they "shall see: and they that have not heard shall "understand," Rom. xv. 20. 21. *."

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* "It was the apostle's ambition, (so the original word "signifies), to carry the glad tidings of salvation to those, "who had not before heard of Christ; and thus to face the "dangers and hardships of making the first assault on the "kingdom of Satan, in every place. Nor was he disposed, "in general, to build on the foundation laid by other mi-"nisters, who were competent to carry on the work which "they had happily begun; but rather to fulfil the scrip-

But we must now return to Mr Stewart's more personal history. In the month of August 1802, on the invitation of several ministers who had sought his fellowship in consequence of what they had heard of the doings at Moulin, he took a journey to Ross-shire, being led by a way he knew not, and for purposes which, when he set out, were most foreign from his thoughts. Among other esteemed brethren in that country, he visited Mr Charles Calder of Urquhart, a minister, whose father and grandfather had shone as stars of the first magnitude in the church, and who himself in no wise diminished the lustre of the name and office transmitted to him from such ancestors. Mr C. had none of that constitutional vigour, which enables a man to throw into his public appearances the interest and the attraction which arise from de-

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" ture, which foretold that many nations and rulers would " see and understand such things, as they had before been " strangers to, Isa. lii. 15. Probably, in mentioning this, " he may glance on those false apostles, who crept into " churches which he had planted, and endeavoured to es- " tablish their own reputation and influence there, by " alienating the hearts of his own converts from him ;— " while, like some in our days, they built on his grand " and noble foundation, an edifice of wood, and hay, and " stubble."—SCOTT'S COMMENTARY.

cision of *tone*, and power of action; yet there was in his gentleness something so *saintly*, and in his aspect such an air of indescribable *benignity*, while his doctrine was *Christ*, and his aim evidently to win souls to the Saviour he preached, that, in the absence of voice, gesture, and artificial oratory, no man could regard him in the pulpit without being overawed by the calm and sober majesty of his appearance, and few could resist the simple, yet deep-felt strain of his address. In his church was to be seen an auditory collected from many adjoining, and some distant parishes, listening with the most compressed attention, yet not listening to *admire*, nor, with high-worked passions, intent on the wondrous man, but each one sitting as intent on himself, and as if none besides were interested in the preacher's address. And while the tones of the speaker scarcely struck on the ears of a careless stranger, who went in casually or from curiosity, and complained of an inaudible preacher, they reached the inmost soul of the serious and devout. Mr Calder's ministry was eminently successful, and, though meek and modest almost to timidity, he was bold for Christ. In his family, the daily topics of conversation were, the general interests of Christ's kingdom, and the joys or sorrows of individual Christians, in whose vicissitudes he exquisitely sympathized!

glad, or grieved, as others of the Lord's people felt around him. Mrs C. who was of one of the first families in the North, moved and shone in her own sphere with equal constancy and grace.

To this family Mr Stewart was directed, intending only a wayfaring man's abode.

"When I came to his house," says he, "on "Wednesday last, I supposed that it might "probably occur to him to ask my assistance at "dispensing the Lord's Supper, the time of "which was at hand; and I had made up my "mind to resist every solicitation of the kind. "When he accompanied me to my bed-room, "he pressed me earnestly on the subject, but I "steadily refused. Next day before dinner, "(for I staid till the evening), Mr and Mrs "Calder both renewed their intreaties, not at "all in the way of mere urgent importunity, "but in the most tender and spiritual manner. "Mr Calder appears to be a man not so old in "years, as he is debilitated by much labour, "and an infirm constitution; Mrs Calder is a "very superior woman for piety and intelli-"gence. I cannot now relate all they said to "prevail with me. After talking, we separat-"ed, and thought, and prayed, and cried, till "we were half ashamed to appear to each "other. I was to go on that evening to Mr "P. R——'s. We got early tea. Mrs Calder

" shook me by the hand, but could not take a " final leave. Mr Calder had ordered his horse " to be saddled, and accompanied me nearly " four miles to a ferry, in hopes that I might " yet be directed to consent to stay. It oc- " cupied much of our thoughts, as we rode " silently together. I at last thought, that if it " were indeed the Lord's will to keep me here " to assist at Urquhart, it could not be perhaps " more expressly intimated to me, than by such " continued earnest intreaty made by his dear " servants, not on their own personal behalf on- " ly, but on account of their people. If any " society, or Christian fellowship, could afford " the prospect of spiritual advantage to myself, " it would be such as I enjoy in this country, " where the savour of divine things is so strong. " I trust I shall engage a strong reinforcement " of prayers here, in behalf of my dear people. " Before parting with Mr Calder, I did, in de- " pendence on the Lord's good pleasure, settle " it, that I should spend the preaching days at " his house, and assist as I should be enabled, " and the dear man left me full of gratitude to " God."

Mr Stewart was afterwards connected with this family by a closer tie, the eldest daughter of Mr Calder having been united to him

in marriage, with the cordial approbation of all friends; on which occasion he wrote Mr Black, " that it had pleased the Lord to enrich " him with one of the most precious temporal " blessings he had to bestow."

Of this union, it is sufficient to say, that to the end of his life, Mr Stewart regarded it as a special blessing. And were the letters he wrote to Mrs Stewart, during an occasional absence, nearly twenty years after the period of their marriage, to be submitted to the reader, it would appear, that Newton was not singular in the strain of ardent, yet respectful affection, which runs through " Letters to a Wife."

As Mr Stewart's family was increasing, it became evident to all, how inadequate the emoluments of his parish were for their support. These emoluments, I believe, seldom exceeded £.70 a-year; and as he withheld not his contributions from institutions that had lately sprung up in the Christian world, for the diffusion of Christianity, and was both hospitable by inclination, and peculiarly exposed to have his hospitality put in requisition by the numerous visitants whom his character and operations attracted to Moulin, it could hardly escape the observation of his friends, that some accession to his income was become necessary. There was a general feeling in behalf of the Moulin people,

and almost every one revolted from the idea of being accessary to a separation. However, an impartial and unprejudiced view of the case reconciled many to the prospect; and in 1805, it appears, various plans were in agitation for effecting his translation to Edinburgh,—plans, into which Mr Black entered most warmly. In the midst of these, the parish of Dingwall, adjoining to Urquhart, became vacant; and a very general desire was manifested in that town, to obtain a presentation for Mr Stewart to the charge. This prospect was hardly opened, until he was informed by Mr Black, that another had been appointed. Then he seriously took into consideration his proposed removal to Edinburgh, and wrote to Mr Black the exercises of his mind on the subject.

" I shall now, my dear Sir, submit to you
" what has thus far occurred to us, in consider-
" ing the question of removal to Edinburgh.
" As to the state of the people here, there has
" been no gross declension nor scandalous fall-
" ing off, among those who appear to be truly
" enlightened. But we cannot reckon on any
" accession to their number for many months
" past. There is, or appears to be, a diminu-
" tion of liveliness, and a dulness of spirit hang-
" ing over the most of us. A still uniformity

" prevails throughout our manner of living
" and outward circumstances, which furnishes
" nothing to interest us in behalf of each other.
" I do not think our attachment to each other is
" abated, but it is less excited and kept in ex-
" ercise than it was formerly. The real Christians
" among us are well established in faith and
" knowledge. Some years ago, I should have
" thought it more dangerous to have left them
" exposed to the various winds of doctrine, than
" now, and I believe they would have been
" more hurt at the thought of a separation.
" Indeed, if they should get a young evangeli-
" cal minister in exchange for me, I am persuad-
" ed the affections and interests which would
" be excited, would enliven their devotion, and
" prove of material advantage. But, if they
" got one of a different description, the con-
" sequences would be melancholy.

" As to temporalities, there is no prospect of
" my emoluments being increased. The sti-
" pend cannot be augmented; the manse is
" growing more uncomfortable every season;
" and with wars and taxes, it is very uncertain
" when the Heritors may be prevailed upon to
" build a new one. I used to shrink from the
" idea of living in Edinburgh; my aversion to
" it, I own, is abated. In Edinburgh I would
" find plenty to do, more, I ween, than I could

" accomplish. I have not yet mentioned the " proposal that Divine Providence has brought " under consideration, to any besides my sister " and Mrs Stewart. I intend to communicate " it, however, to some of our pious neighbours, " to request their prayers, and to see what im- " pression it shall make on their minds.

" We had a discussion with Mr K. about " Edinburgh schemes, and tried to take a large " view of the question. As I had been looking " most to reasons for remaining here, Mr K. " and sister, (and I believe Mrs S. joined them), " stated the arguments on the other side,—that " it was not withdrawing from my Master's " service, but only transferring my labour from " a more confined to a more enlarged and di- " versified field;—that the variety of duty, to- " gether with the opportunities of improvement " attending a residence in Edinburgh, would " bring into exercise talents which at present " are dormant for want of scope and cultiva- " tion;—that one's powers are kept more awake, " and one's labour more productive, when di- " rected into different channels, than when " moving in one unvaried track;—that provid- " ing for the maintenance and education of " one's family, is itself a duty of no little mo- " ment; and that it is much more consistent " with duty to embrace a provision of this kind,

" when providentially offered in the way of
" ministerial service, than to go in quest of it
" by engaging in farming, and other secular
" employment in the country;—that if the pre-
" sent proposal (supposing it realized) be reject-
" ed, there is no probability of a similar oppor-
" tunity occurring again; and though it should
" occur at the distance of some years, yet, as
" rustic habits would be gaining strength, and
" mind and body losing vigour, I should be less
" qualified then than now, for discharging duty
" in a new sphere;—that, in yielding to the
" united force of all these reasons, and comply-
" ing with a providential call, which I had
" never thought of soliciting, I needed not fear
" that I was doing injustice to my present
" people; but having brought them past their
" nursing-time, I might safely leave them to
" the direction of that spiritual wisdom and
" knowledge which they have already attained,
" in the confidence that the Lord will take care
" of his own. It appears there is something to
" be said on both sides. I have thought and
" written on the subject till I am tired of both.
" Much do I now need spiritual wisdom, to
" teach me to profit by what has already occur-
" red, and to guide my judgment in whatever
" path may lie before me. Do write me when

" you can, what has occurred in your prayers " and meditations on the subject."

From this state of fluctuation Mr Stewart was in a little while relieved, by providences, the bearings of which he regarded as sufficiently clear for his direction.

Moulin, March . 1805.

" Prepare, my dear Brother, to hear what " will surprise you. Our times are in the " Lord's hands, and his counsel shall stand. " When every prospect and symptom of a " change of place was removed, and when my " people and I were set down again quietly and " comfortably together, a new and unexpected " turn has agitated us afresh. The post brought " me a letter subscribed by the whole town- " council of Dingwall, stating the general de- " sire of the parish to have me called to minis- " ter to them the word of life,—the providences " that had frustrated the views of other candi- " dates, and promoted those respecting my ap- " pointment,—and containing a cordial and a " pressing invitation to accept the charge.

" Besides this, I had a letter from some of " the serious inhabitants of the place, narrating " the various turns of providence, the offers " made to other ministers connected with

" members of the council; their refusal; the " persevering prayers, and other means employ- " ed by the godly all over the country, to gain " the council; the delays, alarms, and disap- " pointments, and at last the complete success " of their wishes.

" You will learn every thing more particu- " larly, when I shew you the correspondence " in Perth, if it please God we meet there. " When I considered all the steps and circum- " stances,—a worldly engine put in motion by " the breath of prayer, the " iron gate opening " of its own accord,"—I could not but acknow- " ledge the divine call, nor hesitate to accept it. " I have accordingly written my answer, ac- " cepting the council's invitation. How to " manage with the poor Moulin people, is the " present difficulty. I took a number of them " into my room last night, after worship, read " my letters, and conversed with them. They " were indeed sorely grieved, yet they did not " deny the call being of God, and nothing but " their personal attachment to me hindered " them from fully acquiescing in it. We have " the example and the success of the D—— " people, to encourage us to be instant in prayer, " that the Lord would send a faithful pastor to " Moulin, who may feed them with strong

" meat, for babes milk is all that I could give " them. Now that the people in Ross have " obtained their desire, I must engage them to " help their poor Moulin brethren with their " prayers."

But, although the town-council, and the parishioners at large, were very zealous to procure his nomination, the majority of the Presbytery of Dingwall looked on it with no fond anticipations, and were well disposed to throw as many obstructions in the way, as private influence, and the tactics of church-courts, could bring into action. " My business in the North," he writes more than two months after the above, " met with difficulties and obstacles to " the last. The issuing of the presentation was " retarded, till it was almost too late. There " appeared reason to suspect, that even after it " was signed in London, there was an inten- " tion of keeping it up, till it should prove in- " effectual. Mr ——— had a short conversa- " tion with two young ministers of Dingwall " Presbytery, who were hastening homeward " to exercise the Presbytery's right of presenta- " tion in favour of ———. After some spirit- " ed letters from Dingwall to the Provost in " Edinburgh, it was promised, that the Provost's

" brother, who was coming to D—— about
" " Borough Election," would certainly bring
" the presentation in his pocket. He came,
" however, without it, but seeing the town so
" dissatisfied, and a certain interest likely to
" suffer, he immediately wrote to Edinburgh,
" or to London, and the paper was produced.
" A meeting of Presbytery was held, just three
" days before the six months elapsed. Yester-
" day, I received a letter, that every thing went
" on smoothly, and that the moderation of the
" call was appointed. I trust the Lord will
" glorify his own wisdom and power, in making
" the truth to triumph, while he baffles the
" schemes of its enemies."

Thus was determined a step on which much of the usefulness of his future life depended, and which involved, in its consequences, the spiritual interests of many.

With respect to the propriety of resigning the Moulin charge, a charge endeared by the most tender associations of spiritual kindred and affinity in Christ, different opinions will be held, according to the principles, means of information, and capacity to judge, which meet in the individual who brings the matter into deliberation.

That removal is absolutely unlawful in all

cases, no man will maintain, or if he do, he will involve, in his rash censure, many a distinguished servant of Christ besides Mr Stewart. That a minister, like other men, is at the disposal of his Lord, is unquestionable; and his will is to be learned by the intimations of providence, concurring with the intimations of scripture and of conscience, concerning duty. When a man is satisfied on these points, he is not to be blamed on slight considerations, and on superficial views and regrets for some concomitant inconveniences. That Mr Stewart was fully satisfied on the point, is well known to all who enjoyed his intimacy; and it were rash in others possessing very incompetent means of forming a judgment, and not actually the subjects of similar providences, to pronounce him mistaken in the conduct he pursued. If one place before his eyes the interesting flock at Moulin, going forth under his pastoral care, finding pasture to their full content under his direction, and feeding on the mountains of Zion in peace and concord under his eye, who but grieves at the removal of their guide, and the consequent dispersion that awaits them? But if the circumstances of Dingwall be considered,—the destitution they were in,—the desire for a shepherd which they felt,—the worth of their souls, and

the interest the good Shepherd takes in the whole of his flock collectively,—we shall probably pause before we condemn Mr Stewart's resolution to pass from the care of a well-pastured part of the flock, to tend another division of it that wandered as sheep without a shepherd. That the change was beneficial to himself, as to temporalities, will not alter our judgment; for that benefit was needed, and was the very circumstance that gave preponderance to other motives respecting Dingwall, purely spiritual, when they hung in a condition of suspense. Certainly, had the matter of temporalities been reversed, it would have so far detracted from the wisdom of his determination, and the reasonableness of his change.

While Mr Stewart saw that it was his duty to suffer the relation in which he stood to the parish of Moulin to be dissolved, it was not without feeling for them a concern truly paternal.

" Now that the time of my departure is al-
" most at hand, you will be anxious to know
" how it fares with us all. There is really much
" composure and quiet acquiescence that prevail.
" Some weeks ago I used only to make distant
" allusions to the situation in which we stood.

" Of late, I have thought proper to speak of our " separation more explicitly, and make the men- " tion of it somewhat familiar to our ears, so as " to be able to think and talk of it without over- " powering emotions. Our evening readings " are crowded. The people seem to swallow " the word greedily, considering that their time " may be short."

Mr Stewart's anxiety for the future prosperity of that people, led him to take a deep interest in the appointment of a successor. The nomination was in the hands of a nobleman, who has been long distinguished in that country for his zeal in supporting established order, and for giving stability to the existing constitution in church and state; and as Mr Stewart had lent his influence to compose the minds of the people in times of considerable agitation, and had with ample effect stood forth the firm advocate of loyalty and social order, on Christian principles and in the fear of God, it might reasonably be expected, any representation he should make, relative to the good of the parish, would be entitled to consideration, and have some weight with those most concerned in maintaining the public weal. At least, he thought it became him to use every probable expedient in such an

emergency, and therefore submitted the following statement to the patron:—

"My Lord,

"As his Majesty has been pleased to present "me to the church and living of Dingwall, and "I have received a call from the magistrates, "heritors, and inhabitants of that borough, it is "probable that my settlement will take place "in September. In that event, I shall have to "resign into your Grace's hands my present "living, which I have enjoyed for a consider-"able period by your bounty.

"I willingly take this opportunity of submit-"ting to your Grace's consideration, a fact which "consists with my knowledge, namely, that "during my incumbency, no person residing "in this parish has left the established church, "to join any dissenting connection whatever. "Indulge me, my Lord, in expressing an ear-"nest wish, that in the case of a successor, the "same union and harmony may continue be-"tween minister and people, which are so essen-"tial to the happiness of both. I am induced "to take this liberty in addressing the noble "patron, from the deep concern which I feel "for the peace and improvement of a people a-"mong whom I have happily spent many years

" of my life, and to whom I must ever retain a " warm attachment, though duty now calls me " away from them.

" I am sure the people ought not, and I believe " they will not be forward to make any applica- " tion in favour of an individual candidate, un- " less they understood that it would be agreeable " to your Grace to know their mind. Yet it " would be affectation to conceal, that, in their " own judgment, they must give a preference " to one before another. But I presume no " farther than simply to hint, how much the " quiet and peace of this parish depend on " your Grace's choice of a minister, who, pos- " sessing qualifications which must recommend " him to the esteem of the heritors, may also " be qualified to gain and retain the confidence " of the people.

" I hope your Grace will not charge me with " going beyond the line of my duty, in thus " respectfully representing the state of the " parish I am now about to resign to its noble " patron, who has always shewn a judicious at- " tention to the interests of his people."

I am afraid it will disappoint many to be informed, that a representation so unassuming, and in a matter affecting the dearest interests of

a whole parish, met with no reply. The elders of the congregation, too, wishing to leave nothing untried, sent a representation to the patron, setting forth their great respect for him as their superior, and expressing their unwillingness to make divisions, or to separate themselves from the Establishment; and that they might not be compelled to do so, petitioning that a person should be presented to the parish whom they could conscientiously receive as their minister.

This representation was not more successful; and Mr Stewart having entirely failed in his attempts to obtain for his people a pastor to his own mind or to theirs, was obliged to devolve them on the care of the chief Shepherd, and took leave of them somewhat in the way described in Acts xx. 36, 37 *.

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* On considering the above representations, one cannot forbear reflecting what a fine opportunity was here lost for benevolence, to make many happy,—for patriotism, to attach men to wise institutions,—and for religion, to promote and cherish among a well-affected people the virtues of growing piety! Meanwhile, we are far from insinuating that the Noble Patron acted arbitrarily, and without bringing into exercise a deliberate judgment on the case. His determination was doubtless the result of mature thought; but, at the same time, it was probably influenced by that ancient prejudice which views evangelical principles as necessarily

" We had a favourable journey north," he writes to Mr Black; " I fancy sister may have " already described our parting from Moulin, " and the deep yet composed grief of the dear " sisterhood. We had many an anxious thought " about them on our way. On our arrival in " this country, we took up our residence with " worthy Mr and Mrs C. The 26th Septem- " ber was the important day that loosened my " connection with one flock, and bound me to " another. My reception here has been warm " and cordial in the highest degree. Every " neighbour is more kind than another. Be- " sides offering and sending us many articles of " furniture in loan, till we should get our own " things, we have got presents, &c. &c. &c. I

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allied to political insubordination. Even the tried loyalty of Mr Stewart and his people, could not, it seems, dissolve the imaginary association in the minds of some. It is on this erroneous ground, that when two candidates for a presentation have offered themselves, the *moderately* religious has been generally preferred.

Heritors, however, are at length beginning to act on better principles; and in his own neighbourhood, the writer is happy to perceive a growing solicitude among those possessing influence to promote the spiritual interests of the people in the settling of vacant parishes.

" have preached now two Sabbaths, to a crowd-
" ed and attentive congregation. I have met
" and conversed with several serious men and
" women. Simple warm-hearted Christians
" they appear to be. In short, I have every
" encouragement at present. A great door
" seems to be opened. If the Lord would but
" move the hearts of the people to receive my
" message, as they have so cordially received
" myself, how we should then rejoice toge-
" ther."

Mr Stewart, in his new parish, had to break up ground over which the gospel-plough had not for some time passed. That country presented a scene not often to be seen,—a people of the simplest habits,—when religious, of the sublimest piety,—when not enlightened, addicted to low immoralities, and a prey to debasing superstitions. In no part of the world, perhaps, will be found a clergy more orthodox than those called the popular ministers, and no where are the effects of Calvinistic preaching more broadly exhibited, than in the character and views of the more serious among the people. Experimental religion is there well understood; and it is no uncommon occurrence, at public meetings for religious conference, to ob-

serve a plain peasant rise with all the modesty of retiring diffidence, and on surmounting the visible reluctance of an unassuming mind to obtrude itself on the attention of other men, enter into the discussion of some point of casuistry, or penetrate into the marrow of some doctrinal subject proposed for consideration, with a power of discrimination, and a copiousness of argument, truly surprising. On these occasions one might imagine an Owen revived, having lost nothing but his Greek and Latin quotations.

Their religious views are generally profound; and in no place is the discrimination betwixt converted and unconverted more observed, or more observable. In parishes that have for a long period enjoyed adequate training, the religious standard is high, and the general aspect of the people is plainly as if they sought a better country, and looked on this world as a scene not desireable. They are grave, watchful, and intent on serious thought; and he who would take the oversight of them, had need not to be a novice.

In a letter to Mr Willison, written on his return to Moulin, after his former visit, Mr Stewart thus describes his first impressions:—

" I was greatly refreshed with what I saw " and heard in Ross-shire and Inverness; nu- " merous devout congregations, many lively " Christians, and a great door of utterance. I " was struck with the contrast between the ge- " neral cast of religion in East-Ross, and at " home. Here, religion is in its youthful state; " there, it seems rather in its declining age. " Here, we are warm and affectionate, simple " and unsuspicious; yonder, they are rather in- " different about plain fare, fond of casuistry, " and each occupied about his own particular " experience. Yet their religion is far from " being an unfruitful profession. They are ex- " emplary, moral, kind, and charitable."

But this description would not apply to parishes under the care of unpopular ministers, in which predicament the parish of Dingwall had for some time stood. Their former clergyman was a man of taste and learning, made a good figure in ecclesiastical courts, was a ready and polite preacher, and lived in good terms with the genteel neighbourhood, for which Dingwall is noted. Of his pastoral fidelity not much is known. There were a few pious people in the town, who, as the manner of that country is, travelled far on a Sunday to enjoy evangelical

ordinances. But the general aspect of the place was certainly not religious; and though, on his settlement there, Mr Stewart found many willing to hear the truth, not many were found who knew its power. The Sabbath was little regarded; many were not only lax, but accustomed to draw topics of merriment from the gravity, the devout composure, and the strict lives of the few who professed godliness; and as for the populace, the same levity and thirst for diversion, and inattention to Christian morality, characterized them, which commonly prevail in that class, when not accustomed to the subjection of religious restraints.

That there was much ignorance among the people, was apparent to all who had opportunity, and sufficient knowledge to judge. But it was obvious there was no suspicion entertained by themselves that they were deficient; and, I believe, the assertion of it would have exposed a man to very pointed expressions of resentment. However, their minds were generally disposed, at the period of Mr Stewart's coming among them, to receive both him and his testimony with abundant respect; nor had he been long settled, until a visible alteration took place on external conduct. One instance of which he has pleasantly described in a letter written not two months after his induction:—

" You will be overjoyed to hear something " of gospel news from Dingwall. Our serious " people already remark an evident shaking " among the dry bones. There is, in various " instances, a melting under the word. The " house of an experienced Christian in the " town, D—— M——, which used to be open " on the Sabbath evening to a few who attend- " ed to his reading and prayer, is now crowded. " A mason in the neighbouring parish, who " was anxious to send a letter in haste to his " son, about a piece of work he had undertaken, " on a Sabbath morning applied in vain to dif- " ferent persons to write for him. One had cut " his thumb, another was not at home. He " came to Dingwall to try to get his letter " written there. From this he was led to go " to Dingwall church. He was much impress- " ed, and next day confessed, to a serious ac- " quaintance, the steps by which he had been " led, and that he thought the sermon he heard " was all levelled at himself. We have a pre- " cious select party, who meet every Friday " evening for prayer and conversation at D—— " M——'s. We have had some special meet- " ings in the Manse, for prayer about Moulin. " The brethren here are preparing a letter to " be sent to their brethren at Moulin, to en- " courage them.—Poor Moulin!"

The concluding part of the above extract will painfully recal the reader's thoughts to Moulin. Their pastor was hardly removed, until sectaries began to preach to them the duty to come out from the Established Church, and be separate. "There has a great change "taken place about Moulin," one of them writes, "which gives me many a sad hour and "day, when I consider how, formerly, every "thing was going on prosperously among us. "But, perhaps, for our sin in the misimprove-"ment of former privileges, our enemies tri-"umph over us, and we go mourning because "of the oppression of the enemy all day long; "but with God there is mercy and deliver-"ance." And only three years after Mr Stewart's removal, the same person says, "All things "about our place are growing worse and worse, "—iniquity abounding and practised without "restraint,—the Sabbath much profaned,—and "things turning to their old course; only the "few who love the Saviour are still holding on, "like Gideon, "faint, yet pursuing." "

Such accounts must have been a grief to Mr Stewart, for no man was more susceptible of religious sympathy than himself. He did what he could to alleviate the distress, by correspondence

and advice, and by prayer, in which he got the religious people around him to engage on their account. And as a specimen of his counsels, we insert the following letter in answer to a desponding one he had received:

" My dear Friend,

" I have been wishing for many weeks to " send my blessing and best wishes to you, and " my dear brethren and well-wishers in the pa- " rish of Moulin. But it is really little I can " write to any body, as my eyes do not bear to " do much by candle-light, and there is but " little day-light for other purposes. Your " very welcome letter of the 2d January came " to hand, and awakened anew my affectionate " remembrance of you all, and quickened my " poor prayers for your comfort and edifica- " tion. I see the Lord continues to try you " with a scarcity of spiritual bread; but while " he leaves you the blessed word, and his Holy " Spirit to dress the food for your use, and to " prepare your souls to receive it, you must not " think that you are starved. God wrought a " miracle before he would allow the widow of " Sarepta to starve in time of famine. If he " feeds even the fowls of the air, will he not " much more feed you by sending you spiritual " food? I am unwilling to add, " O ye of little

" faith!" but still I feel much for your situa-
" tion, and indeed my heart and my affections
" often go out towards you in secret, and I
" feel, like Paul, a strong desire to see your
" face in the flesh, and if the Lord would
" honour me so far as to stablish your faith,
" and impart to you some spiritual gift, Rom.
" i. 11. But, O what a precious privilege is it
" to have a Saviour to whom we can express
" our desire, and commit all our cares!—to
" whom we can commit each other in prayer,
" and trust all our concerns!—an ever-watch-
" ful Shepherd, who knows the wants of his
" sheep, and their weakness!—and although he
" sometimes lets them feel the cold, yet he stays
" his rough wind in the day of his east wind.
" Many a saint now in glory was on earth
" destitute, afflicted, tormented, wandering in
" deserts and mountains, Heb. xi. 37. &c.
" who are now convinced that it was good for
" them to have been afflicted. Is it not a mer-
" cy for you that you are not like the poor
" Christians at Ephesus, when Paul left them
" exposed as a prey to grievous wolves, not
" sparing the flock? and that there are not per-
" sons arising among yourselves speaking per-
" verse things? Acts xx. 29. 30. But I ac-
" knowledge it must be a grief to your heart,
" to see so many around you unconcerned

" about eternity, careless about the one thing
" needful, not minding the gospel, nor think-
" ing about it. But as it was in our Saviour's
" days, so it was in the days of the apostles,
" and so it will be until the Spirit be poured
" out from on high."

Of his proceedings at Dingwall, he writes to his sister, seven months after his settlement, this account:—

" Our Sunday operations continue, and we
" hope with some effect. The practice here
" had been to have but two discourses, one in
" each language, all the year round, without any
" interval, beginning at a quarter past twelve.
" About a month ago, I changed the hour of
" meeting to eleven, which gave me time for a
" Gaelic lecture and sermon. Then I have an
" hour of interval, and an English discourse be-
" ginning at two. About the same time, hav-
" ing got some length of day-light, in the even-
" ing I began a diet of catechising in church at
" half past four, which continues to six. I find
" all this just as much as my strength will bear.
" But as my discourses are not long, and the
" church does not require great exertion of voice,
" I hope I shall be able to continue. The cate-
" chising diet is well attended, and the church

" quite full, just as it used to be at Moulin,
" with this difference, that we have here several
" of the gentry, who understand Gaelic, that at-
" tend regularly. As soon as this meeting is
" dismissed, our Sabbath schools begin, of which
" we have now three, besides D—— M———'s
" open meeting for notes and reading, and ano-
" ther in R—— N———'s house. These va-
" rious diets fill up the day, and afford oppor-
" tunity of improvement to many who can nei-
" ther read nor think to any purpose at home.
" When we recollect the opposition that was
" made to the introduction of a gospel ministry
" in this place, and now see the freedom with
" which various means of improvement are em-
" ployed and countenanced, we are encouraged
" to hope that they will be productive of good.
" D—— M———, my town catechist, has
" gone over the greater part of the families in
" town, in the way of catechetic instruction, on
" week-day evenings. I have occasion to be
" called to baptize children in the town. I al-
" ways make it a practice to read and expound
" a portion of the scriptures on these occasions.
" I think it has as good an effect in this way,
" as though I brought them to church. Yes-
" terday, in the house of ———, I had an op-
" portunity of reading a sort of chamber-lecture
" to about twenty ladies and gentlemen, from
" Luke x. 8. 20. It must be seen that the

" kingdom of God is come nigh unto them; and
" we hope the Lord will gather some into it.
" Though some weeks have now elapsed since
" the event, I cannot yet write or think with a
" dry eye of the sore bereavement which I, in
" common with many, have suffered in the un-
" expected removal of our dear brother Black.
" It is, indeed, an awful token of the divine dis-
" pleasure, as Mrs C——— expressed it, of a
" hostile disposition in the court of heaven, when
" its ambassadors are thus suddenly recalled.
" Edinburgh has lost more than half its attrac-
" tion for me. I could not find myself at home
" there any more. Indeed, there is very little
" probability that I shall see Edinburgh for a
" while."

The event so deeply deplored by Mr Stewart, had taken place on the 25th February 1806; and as Mr Black was only in the forty-fourth year of his age, and had written ten days before, stating his family and himself to be in ordinary health, the sudden and unexpected change must have added to the poignancy of his grief. Of this friend and guide of his youth, he continued to bear the most tender recollections to the close of his own life *.

* For an interesting sketch of Mr Black's life, see Memoir prefixed to his published Sermons.

Among other expedients which Mr Stewart was on the alert to devise for improving his people in religious knowledge, he states, that he had lately begun a sort of private lecture for the benefit of some of his female parishioners. "It "was suggested to me," says he, "by some "young women applying for admission to the "Lord's table, whom I could not encourage to "proceed, and persuaded to stay back. As "they were of that rank that I could not al- "ways have access to them at their own houses, "nor examine them at a public diet of catechis- "ing, I thought it was best to invite them to "my own house. Others have been at their "own request admitted, so that I have a party "of nine or ten ladies. We propose to meet "once a fortnight. We had our second meet- "ing yesterday (Friday), at one o'clock. When "you intreat the Lord for your great family, "pray that he may also send a blessing on me "and my little hospital."

A few months after he writes to his sister:

"I should have saluted you last Friday on "your birth-day, but it was the day of my fe- "male meeting, and I need Friday afternoon "as well as Saturday, to prepare for the Sab-

" bath's work. I am still getting new acces-
" sions to my female meeting; about seventeen
" attend now. In my lectures to them I find
" Halyburton's Great Concern of principal use.
" What the fruits may be we do not yet see,
" but I trust the Lord will, in his own time,
" bear testimony to the word of his grace. I
" had occasion, two or three weeks ago, to pro-
" test against an evil which was meeting with
" encouragement, and likely to grow if not
" checked. For some seasons past, a company
" of players spent two or three months in Inver-
" ness, and made a visit to Dingwall before
" leaving the country. Our town's people
" were passionately fond of the entertainment.
" At my next meeting, I took the opportunity
" of discoursing pretty freely to my ladies about
" the evil of such entertainments. Only three
" of them had gone to see them, and none of
" them went any more."

While on this subject of theatrical amuse-ment, we shall insert another instance of Mr Stewart's resolute and successful exertions to keep his parish free from those demoralizing ex-hibitions, though it occurred four years after the above-mentioned attempt.—" We have had " some stir this week," says he to his sister,

" about theatrical amusements, of which the " detail would entertain you, but I fear I must " confine myself to outlines. A man of the " name of T———, with his son, came to the " town last week, waited on Mr ———, the " senior Bailie, with an introduction, request- " ing the use of the town-hall for a party of " comedians. Bailie ——— consulted Mr " ———, the leading man in the town, who " readily agreed, and the hall was granted. " Workmen were immediately employed to " place seats, &c. All this passed before I was " aware of what was a-doing. It was Friday " evening. I was afraid it was already too late " to attempt stopping the players, as they " were in possession of the hall. However, I " called on Bailie ———, and remonstrated " against the measure of giving the hall. He " told me it was done with Mr ———'s con- " currence, but regretted, as he saw me so " much hurt by it. I then went to Mr ———. " I found him much disposed to support them; " but at last prevailed with him to send a mes- " sage to Mr ———, that if he chose to recal " the grant of the room, *he* would have no ob- " jection to his doing so. His message I de- " livered to Mr ———, who undertook to send " for the player, and let him know this. A " little before 9 o'clock, I called again on Mr

" ———, and found him writing me a long " letter, saying, that he might expose himself " by breaking his engagement with the player, " unless he was supported by the Town-Coun- " cil, and proposed to call a meeting of the " Council. I approved, and a meeting was ac- " cordingly called. Though late that evening, " I called on these counsellors, and got them to " engage heartily to oppose the players. Next " forenoon, the result of the meeting was offi- " cially communicated to me, viz. that two " were for giving the hall, and four against it, " unless I consented to an exhibition for one " night only. I could not, consistently with " my decided and avowed judgment, give such " a consent; of course the man was told that " he must give up the hall, on being repaid his " expenses in fitting it up, which were but " trifling. He afterwards called on me him- " self, to endeavour to gain me, but it would " not do."

But while Mr Stewart acted as a Christian, he was alive to every claim of humanity, and the following note will shew, that though he opposed Mr T———, he was not his enemy, and was not without the most benevolent concern for his best interests:—

" Sir,

" I truly feel for the embarrassment to which " you must have been subjected by your dis- " appointment in this town. So far as the in- " closed guinea can go to relieve you, I give it " with perfect good-will. I cannot forbear to " express my strong regret, that a man of educa- " tion and talents, of character and respectable " connection, for all which I am willing to give " you credit, should stoop to the degrading con- " dition of picking up a precarious subsistence, " by the mean arts of mimickry and buffoonery. " I sincerely wish you and your son had a more " creditable profession. I wish I could first per- " suade you, and then assist you to follow some " other line, in which you might have a more " comfortable and respectable subsistence in this " life, and enjoy the prospect of a happy eter- " nity in the life to come; neither of which ad- " vantages you can expect to possess in your " present occupation. May God Almighty im- " press this admonition on your heart, and lead " you to think seriously of your everlasting con- " cerns before it be too late."

The union of generosity and religious principle manifested in the above communication, could not fail to commend itself to the conscience of Mr T———. However, in his an-

swer, after making suitable acknowledgements for the donation, he could not refrain from some reflections on the "bigotted sophistry of those, "who make no allowance for appearances they "do not comprehend, and condemn what does "not immediately suit their particular way of "thinking, or have not refinement or sensi- "bility enough to discriminate." And "as for "theatrical representations," he observed, "have "they not for ages tended to reform mankind? "are they not supported by the best regulated "governments in the world, as well as the most "enlightened; and attended, as a part of edu- "cation, in almost every seminary where reli- "gious tenets are instilled, and principles esta- "blished?" And then he goes on to shew, that to represent a bad character, must rather be subservient to the interests of morality, than injurious; defending his profession, as it can only be defended, on principles from which true religion revolts, and which Christian morality expressly disclaims.

It is not known that any good was produced on the mind of T——— by this incident. His subsequent proceedings in Dingwall, shewed no respect for the judgment of his monitor, and the lovers of pleasure sympathized with him on their common disappointment. "As a little "ferment was excited by T———, I thought

" it proper, next Lord's day, to make a short " address after divine service, highly approving " the conduct of the Council in excluding the " players from the town, and urging all who " regarded the interests of religion, good order, " industry, and sobriety, to join me in discoun- " tenancing their admission now, and on every " future occasion. The few serious people are " pleased and thankful that such an engine of " vice has been stopped. The majority submit " to their disappointment with sullen murmur- " ing." However, the delicacy and yet determination he manifested on the occasion, and the known inflexibility of his purpose to set his face against such spectacles on the ground of Christian principle, had the effect to deter other bands from invading the land for the following seven years, or at least wrought on the minds of the borough magistracy to refuse all applications of a similar kind.

In 1808, Mr Stewart received a very animating letter from a clergyman in Staffordshire, who, having heard of the revival at Moulin, and having had a like honour put on his own ministry some years before, was induced, though entirely a stranger, and of a different branch of the Christian church, to open a correspondence with his fellow-servant, to gain additional information respecting the Moulin people, and

strengthen each others hands in their common work. This new friendship Mr Stewart delighted to consider as seasonably provided for him by his divine Master, in order to solace him for the recent removal of Mr Black; and in warmth of piety, and strength of attachment, though no personal interview ever took place, he seems to have been all a friend could wish. The first letter of Mr D——— was addressed to Moulin, on the supposition Mr Stewart was still there. Mr Stewart's answer is dated,

" *Dingwall, Ross-shire, June* 23. 1808.

" My dear Sir,

" Seldom have I been favoured with a more " gratifying communication than that which I " unexpectedly received, some days ago, from " your hand. Among the precious tokens of " love with which the Lord has been pleased " at times to revive my sluggish soul, I have " found reasons to distinguish particularly the " expressions of regard which I have received " from some of his dear children. I assure you, " my dear Sir, that your brotherly salutation " was a cheering cordial to my dull spirit. I " am sure I felt it such; and I wish, in my " poor way, to acknowledge it, and to bless the " Lord who put it in your heart to address me, " and stir me up to thankfulness to that gra-

" cious Master who has, in various ways, help-
" ed his unworthy servant. I wished to return
" you an answer immediately, but some avoca-
" tions hindered me for a week. I now gladly
" seize the first vacant day to endeavour to
" make you some return.

" That short printed account which intro-
" duced my name to your notice, contained
" some particulars of my own history, and of
" the Lord's gracious visitation of my dark
" soul, as well as of my benighted parish. In
" giving a brief continuation of that account, I
" must again have recourse to egotism, for my
" own story is closely interwoven with that of
" my parishioners. The interest you have
" taken in me and my people will naturally
" excite a curiosity to know what led me to
" separate from my beloved flock, and to re-
" move my residence to the town from which
" I date this letter.

" During two years subsequent to the date
" of my printed account, we continued, on the
" whole, in a flourishing and progressive state;
" and the influences of the Divine Spirit were
" apparent in the heavenly walk and conversa-
" tion of those whose hearts he had renewed.
" I shall here refer to a few pages of appendix
" which was subjoined to a third impression of
" my letter, and which I inclose. From this

" period, however, there did not appear any ac-
" cession to the number of converts. The bulk
" of the people appeared satisfied with lending
" their approbation to what they saw and heard,
" and attending regularly to ordinances, but
" there was no more pressing into the kingdom
" of heaven. The heavens appeared to be shut
" up, and the showers were withheld. Of those
" who formed our little Christian society, some
" were in Providence removed to a distance,
" and others were called home by death, so that
" our numbers began to lessen, rather than in-
" crease.

" My removal proved, as I expected, a sti-
" mulus to the minds of the people, as well as
" to my own. It was painful, indeed, but I
" am persuaded it was salutary. Some at-
" tempts were made to influence the Duke of
" Athole, patron of the parish of Moulin, to
" present a man of evangelical principles to
" the vacant living, but without effect. The
" consequence is, that some have withdrawn
" from the ministry of the present incum-
" bent, and some have removed out of the
" parish. I hear but melancholy accounts of
" the greater part of the people. They are
" growing careless and licentious,—I fear
" against their better knowledge and con-

" viction. But the few godly keep close to-
" gether; they continue to meet often to-
" gether, for prayer and conference, and love
" and cherish one another. I have visited
" them repeatedly since my settlement here,
" and found them " sorrowful and rejoicing."
" Two or three of Moulin parish, and a good
" number of the neighbouring parishes of
" Blair, Logierait, and Dowally, who were
" seriously disposed, have joined a sect of In-
" dependents, whose founders are pious, zealous
" men, but over-attached to congregational
" government, and to an ideal purity of com-
" munion. I wish I could give you any agree-
" able account of the few congregations of Scots
" Episcopalians in Perthshire. We have a
" small congregation of the same connection
" in this town, very worthy decent people,
" withal very frank and friendly to me. I am
" acquainted with one of their ministers, who
" occasionally officiates here, a man of learning
" and respectability. But how inferior to the
" burning lights among your English brethren,
" Cadogan, Milner, Newton, Cecil, &c. whose
" names are justly dear to us.

" I have not time nor room at present, to add
" much about the state or character of the peo-
" ple with whom I am now connected. As to

" my own situation, I certainly enjoy privileges
" and advantages far beyond what I possessed
" in my former station, particularly from the so-
" ciety and example of pious ministers, and the
" conversation of experienced Christians. That
" my " profiting" under these advantages, should
" " appear" so little, is, alas! matter of sore la-
" mentation! But enough of myself. Let us
" adore that Saviour who, I trust, does guide us
" both, and will keep that we have committed
" unto him against *that day*.

" Let me hope, my dear Sir, that you will
" find time and inclination to favour me with
" the continuance of a correspondence so auspi-
" ciously begun. It will be most gratifying to
" me to hear of your dear spiritual children at
" C———, and what the Lord has done for
" their souls. I remember Mr M. well, and am
" under particular obligation to him for encou-
" raging you to write to his remote, secluded
" countryman. I will be happy to hear that
" the Lord gives him employment in his vine-
" yard. I sympathize with you on your weak
" state of health. I bless God my health is
" pretty sound and uniform, though I am by no
" means robust or equal to great bodily exer-
" tion. A circumstance I need to mention in
" my first letter, which may make me some-

" times a tardy correspondent, is a stiffness or " imbecillity in my fingers, which commonly " makes writing a tedious and laborious opera- " tion. But it is a mercy to be able to use my " fingers at all.

To the same.

" *Dingwall, 29th July* 1808.

" My very dear Sir,

" From my knees, where I think the Spirit " of God has been trying to stir up a little my " dull sluggish spirit, I repair to my desk, to " express the very high gratification I received, " in various ways, from the repeated perusal of " your favour of the 23d instant. Verily, I " cannot sufficiently admire the tender dealing " of our God with his most unworthy, ungrate- " ful servant. When I deserved, for my inac- " tivity and carelessness, to have been severely " chastised, instead of the rod, he makes me to " hear an unknown voice from a distance, sweet- " ly awakening me, and inviting me to arise " and call upon my God. What shall I render " to the Lord for all his benefits towards me? " Truly he is the good Shepherd who calls the " wanderers home, and furnishes supplies in the " wilderness. To your affectionate invitation

" to " go to pray before the Lord, and to seek
" the Lord of hosts," my heart most readily re-
" plies, and I trust with sincerity, " I will go
" also," Zech. viii. 21. I do not know that you
" could have named a *more convenient hour for*
" *me*, than the one you have already chosen.
" I can confidently assure you, my dear brother,
" that no difference in rituals or government
" shall make the smallest separation between us.
" If you and Mr M. could unite so cordially to-
" gether, I, who occupy a kind of middle place,
" may easily coalesce with both. Indeed, to
" confess a secret, I incline much more to Epis-
" copacy than to Independency. But I believe
" that a sincere disciple of Christ may faithfully
" follow his Master, and get to heaven either way.
" I do feel a warm interest in your esteemed
" friend Mr E———, and sympathy for his suf-
" ferings; at least, according to the measure of
" my feelings, which, if you knew them, you
" would reckon extremely moderate. The cir-
" cumstances you are pleased so frankly to com-
" municate in your own situation, serve to give
" me a nearer and more distinct view of my
" newly acquired friend, and (to adopt Mr Wil-
" berforce's language) to bring our hearts into
" *closer contact* together. You have already
" most kindly adopted me as your associate in
" the oratory; and you are in a fair way of find-

" ing me your companion in the parlour, the
" study, and the sanctuary. Yesterday's post
" brought me your letter, and this day, being
" *Friday*, I would make no delay, but in my
" poor feeble manner, I essayed to join myself
" to my two kind beloved fellow-disciples of
" B—— and W——, that we might warm our
" hearts together at the fire of the same altar.
" To assist you in performing the kind brother-
" ly service of intercession in behalf of your fa-
" voured new associate, I must beg your atten-
" tion to some particulars in my situation. I
" wish to imitate, if I can, your amiable frank-
" ness; and judging from myself, I think I
" need make no apology for minuteness. Be-
" hold me, then, the father of six young immor-
" tal creatures, not unpromising in their dispo-
" sitions and capacities, but *every one* dead in
" trespasses and sins, waiting to be quickened by
" the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus Christ
" from the dead; blessed with a partner, pious,
" intelligent, active, indefatigable in her atten-
" tion to the interests, both temporal and spiri-
" tual, of her children; pastor of a flock nearly
" 1500 in number, a great majority of whom
" are very ignorant and unconcerned. We have
" a small number of pious experienced Chris-
" tians, who associate together, and strengthen
" each other's hands, and we find a very few

" who feel desirous to know the truth, and " seem beginning to feel somewhat of its impres- " sion. One of my own greatest wants, which " I much need to have supplied, is the want " of zeal and activity in my blessed Master's " cause. Indolence and unconcern weigh me " sadly down, and make me an unprofitable " servant. Ask for me greater earnestness in " my Redeemer's service, and more solicitous " concern about the miserable state of my poor " perishing people; along with this, more spi- " ritual and experimental knowledge, that I " may adapt my counsels to the different con- " ditions of my people. I want, besides, spi- " ritual wisdom and discretion to rule my *house*, " that I may bring up my children in the fear " and knowledge of the Lord, and have them " in subjection in all *gravity*, a quality in " which, even at my time of life, I am not a " little deficient. You will ask for me, like- " wise, my dear friend, more firmness in op- " posing or reproving what I disapprove, for I " am sadly enslaved to complaisance. I want " —but I may say with you, what want I not? " I am an expensive, yet useless workman. " Indeed, it would surprise you, if you knew " the person whom you have distinguished by " your favour, how the Lord should have " made him successful, or ever employed him

" at all. But the Lord's ways are not our " ways. By committing his invaluable trea- " sure to coarse, clumsy, earthen vessels, he se- " cures the glory to himself, and all is as it " should be."

To the same.

" *Dingwall, 23d July* 1810.

" Your last letter, my dear Sir, brings much " delightful and encouraging intelligence; our " dear brother E——— restored to a good mea- " sure of health and ability in his Master's ser- " vice,—your own strength rather improved,— " your congregation listening with attention, " and not in vain, to the glad tidings you bring " them,—the number of evangelical clergymen " increasing,—and the kingdom of our gracious " Redeemer enlarging. What reason have we " for hope and joy! Yes, my dear brother, let " us encourage ourselves in the Lord. He " hath not left, and he never will leave him- " self without a witness. I, who have not " been led through deep waters, am perhaps " on that account less apt to view things in a " gloomy light, than others who have known " the depths of Satan. I am not sure whether " this may be the cause which makes me con- " sider as a favourable omen, a thing that gives

" much uneasiness to the pious people here, I
" mean a new species of persecution which is
" just making its appearance in the church.
" When, by the rigid enforcing of the law of
" patronage, the approbation of the people
" came to be entirely overlooked in the settle-
" ment of the minister, it often happened that
" a minister was placed in a parish, at the sole
" pleasure of the patron, neither acceptable to
" the people, nor faithful to their interests. In
" this case, the only resource left to those who
" earnestly desired to be edified under a gospel-
" ministry, was, either to join a Dissenting
" congregation, or to become the stated hearers
" of an evangelical minister, wherever they
" could find one, in the Established Church.
" The former mode was often out of their
" power, for there are few Dissenting churches
" in these northern counties, and the people are
" too poor to maintain them. As they are cor-
" dially attached to the Established Church,
" they greatly preferred attending a faithful
" parish minister, though under the inconve-
" nience of travelling many miles to hear him.
" Accordingly, it was no uncommon thing for
" persons to leave their own parishes, and go
" from ten to fifteen miles on a Sunday morning
" to church, and return in the evening. Our
" *moderate* brethren, jealous of the popularity

" of some of their neighbours, and irritated
" against their own people, took their measures,
" and obtained the sanction of our most Vene-
" rable Assembly to a rule, subjecting to the
" heaviest censures, all who should be guilty of
" the horrid schism of withdrawing from their
" parish church, and hearing sermon regularly
" in a neighbouring church. Whether this
" rule will be rigorously enforced, may depend
" much on the tempers of particular ministers;
" but I have no doubt that it will in some pa-
" rishes in this county, and it is easy to foresee,
" that it will be productive of very serious hard-
" ships. But we are assured, that any suffering
" to which our dear people will be subjected for
" righteousness sake, will be graciously over-
" ruled for their growth in grace, and for the
" spread of the gospel."

The hardships that result from exercising an arbitrary patronage, without regarding the circumstances or inclination of the people, to which Mr Stewart alludes in the above letter, have been long felt, and grievously deplored in those parts. By a judicious and Christian exercise of the right they claim, the patrons had it in their power to attach the people to themselves in a manner known only in places where hereditary chieftainship obtains. But by forcing upon

them spiritual guides they could not receive, as being in their opinion unqualified, and unworthy of their confidence, men of rank have, on too many occasions, done what they could to dissolve the spell which hereditary distinctions and traditionary influence had cast over the minds of the plebeian orders.

If it be said, the opinion of the people is only to be contemned when it differs from the judgment of their superiors, this is a sentiment which Christianity never taught, and which political wisdom never approved; and on fairly meeting the question at issue betwixt a reclaiming parish *refusing* to acknowledge a pastor imposed on them, and the patron insisting on his legal right to impose, it will perhaps in general be found, that the judgment of the people is not so unsound or irrational as their opponents allege, and that, if there is any truth in religion, and any benefit to be derived from its ordinances, a man of reputed piety and circumspect life, is much more likely to lead them to the benefits of religion, than one whose principles are without character, and his life without sanctity.

In that country, so high is the opposition to an exceptionable presentee sometimes carried, that almost the whole parishioners abandon his

ministry, and refuse the sacraments at his hand. Under the influence of this scrupulosity of conscience, the ordinances of religion are not neglected, but painfully resorted to in places far distant, if no popular clergyman is near; and on a Sabbath morning, the roads leading to a well-esteemed preacher, are thronged by strangers from a distance. Of these wanderers, many resorted to Dingwall during Mr Stewart's incumbency; and as they were generally persons of at least professed religion, there was something very imposing in their numbers, in the solemnity of their gesture, and in the apparent devotion of their worship.

No law can restrain the attendance of the people on ordinary means, to receive instruction, where they list; but the desertion and implied disesteem of their people, is very galling to their own pastors, how much soever they pretend to undervalue the taste and opinions of the vulgar; and, of course, the objects of their preference do not escape censure, as encouraging those secessions by flattering the popular prejudices. However, as the ecclesiastical law strictly prohibits any minister from administering Baptism or the Lord's Supper to extra-parochial hearers, a watchful eye is kept on the conduct of the popular clergy, to detect any infraction

of the established order; and where found, no pity is shewn to the offender. Mr Stewart was sufficiently circumspect in these points. As to the article of marriage, however, he refused to be limited; and to a neighbouring minister, whose parishioners had left him, with the exception, it is said, of those officially bound to attend, (viz. the schoolmaster and beadle), and who had sent him a remonstrance on that subject, and charged him with an intended violation of his rights, in proposing to marry a couple whom he knew to be on their road to Dingwall for that purpose, he replied:—

"I received your letter this day about half "an hour after marrying J—— M—— and "C—— A——. I apprehend you are quite "mistaken in supposing, that in doing so, I am "guilty of an undue interference between you "and the people of K—— parish. Many peo- "ple in this parish have been married by other "clergymen than their parish minister, without "lines from me; nor would I ever think of "such an odious and unconstitutional measure, "as depriving people of their civil right of be- "ing married by any minister they chose, af- "ter the banns have been regularly published.

"Indeed, I have all along given my people

" to understand, that they have no occasion to " ask my leave to be married by whom they " please; for the law requires only proclama- " tion of banns, but astricts the parties to no " particular minister. I will go farther and " say, that I have ever reckoned it very unbe- " coming a conscientious pastor to oblige his " parishioners, by compulsory measures, to re- " ceive baptism from his hand, if they were " unwilling to take it, and preferred another. " And any one who knows human nature, will " not expect to extend his usefulness by arbi- " trary restrictions, or compulsive impositions. " These are the maxims on which I have " hitherto acted; nor do I wish any of my " brethren to act otherwise towards me. And " however reprehensible or unneighbourly you " may think my conduct toward you, I assure " you I am not disposed to make you an ex- " ception in the license that I would allow my " people; for if any parishioner of mine shall " apply to you for marriage or for baptism, I " give you full liberty to celebrate the one, and " to administer the other, upon the parties pro- " ducing the ordinary certificates under the hand " of the session-clerk."

Several of his co-presbyters were disposed to

keep a watchful eye on his proceedings; but, as he both knew his own rights, and was not to be intimidated in doing his duty, and was fully competent to meet his moderate opponents on the arena of debate, he was not often molested in church courts. Indeed, his character was so uniformly consistent, and the popular favour so meekly sustained, that he gave no occasion of blame, except what sprung from the offence of superior zeal and sanctity.

In one parish, Mr Stewart had two congregations, perfectly distinct and dissimilar in character. Those who attended the Gaelic service in the forenoon, were chiefly of the lower class, and many of them from remote places. Of this audience, the aspect was deeply serious; a solemn stillness pervaded the multitude, and nothing was heard but the tones of the preacher's voice, unless now and then a sigh, or a groan, confessed the inward emotions of the full heart. In addressing this auditory, Mr Stewart had usually great enlargement and freedom, and to them his "gospel came not in word only." But in the afternoon, the congregation consisted of the neighbouring gentry, and those who held official situations in the town, together with such among the lower classes as understood English, in which not many, except those in busi-

ness, were competently versed for profiting by a discourse in that language. That Mr Stewart had little satisfaction in this department of duty, he often confessed and lamented. Not but that attention was paid, and many compliments lavished on the preacher's performances; but what are the civilities a minister receives from a people who refuse to be won by his ministry to Christ? Shall attention to himself make him overlook the injury done to his Lord? If abundance of respect could have satisfied Mr Stewart, he would have been satisfied; but he looked to their souls, and to the affecting brevity of a day of grace; and that many of them were concerned for improving that day, very little evidence appeared.

"I do not know," writes Mr Stewart, on the approach of a sacramental occasion, "I do not "know that I ever felt the burden of duty "heavier upon my mind, than in the prospect "of administering the Lord's supper here next "Lord's day, to the English congregation, so "careless do they appear. It was a matter of "anxious concern and prayer with me, how I "should preach to them on the preceding Sun-"day, and how I should preach on the commu-"nion day. I was directed on the two last Sab-"baths to these texts, Matth. xv. 26. "It is not

" meet to take the children's bread, and to cast
" it unto the dogs;" and John vii. 37. " If any
" man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."
" I trust I was enabled to be faithful in exhort-
" ing every man, and warning every man. For
" my action sermon, I have fixed on that verse,
" Luke xx. 13. " Then said the Lord of the
" vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my
" beloved Son, it may be they will reverence
" him, when they see him."

" To your queries about the state of religion
" in this parish, I fear I must answer in a com-
" plaining tone. Irreligion, indifference about
" spiritual concerns, attachment to the world,
" the intemperate use of spirituous liquor, pre-
" vail to a melancholy extent. The doctrines
" of the gospel are heard, in the main, I think,
" with indifference rather than dislike, which I
" ascribe to their not being understood or at-
" tended to. Some weeks ago, on occasion of
" preaching on the necessity of regeneration
" with close application, a strong and general
" dissatisfaction was openly expressed in many
" companies during the ensuing week, and some
" declared they were on the point of quitting
" the church. I thought there was something
" hopeful in this movement. They seemed at
" last to have felt a little the sword's point. But,

" alas! it went no farther. They only knit " their brows, muttered something against the " preacher, and then sat as composedly on their " seats as ever. But still, amidst this abound- " ing aversion and resistance to the truth, the " good seed appears not to have altogether pe- " rished. There are several, among the lower " ranks, who shew an earnest desire for reli- " gious knowledge, and the company and fel- " lowship of pious persons, and appear to re- " ceive " the truth in the love of it." Our ad- " vanced Christians bring me some encouraging " intelligence of this kind, from time to time. " While I am ready to cry, almost in despon- " dency, " Who hath believed our report?" one " or two instances of awakened souls encourage " me to say, Behold, is not here the arm of the " Lord revealed."

But though Mr Stewart mourned the state of lukewarmness in which his English congregation generally lay, there were among them a few names of distinguished excellence, in whom he had great delight; and if he had some griefs, he had also many times of refreshing among his Gaelic people, and especially on sacramental occasions, the wonted solemnities of which he thus describes:—

" Three weeks ago, the Lord's supper was " celebrated in this place. This is a season of " more than ordinary solemnity in these north- " ern counties. We have divine service per- " formed on three several week days in English " and in Gaelic, and two discourses preached " in each language on all of those days. Four " or five ministers are invited to preach, be- " sides the parish minister; and where the pas- " tor is himself a faithful evangelical preacher, " he employs none but persons of the same " description to officiate along with him. Se- " rious Christians, from a distance of thirty or " forty miles, assemble with many others, to " the number of some thousands. These are " lodged and entertained by the inhabitants of " the parish. After attending the public ser- " vices of the day, the remainder of them are " employed partly in secret devotion, partly in " private social worship, where some more aged " experienced Christian presides. Altogether " it is a great solemn festival, of four or five " days continuance. Believers are greatly re- " freshed and edified with the various talents " which are brought into exercise, among so " many preachers, and the various matter which " is carried home to their souls, suited to the " cases of each; and also by the pleasing and " animating intercourse with Christian acquain-

" tances, old fellow-pilgrims, whom perhaps " they seldom or never meet with, except in " these periodical solemn interviews. In such " a large and mixed multitude as then comes " together, there is always a great proportion " of the ignorant and graceless. These, too, " are particularly noticed in the addresses from " the pulpit, and often with strong effect, and " merciful success.

" On the late sacramental occasion here, we " were favoured with very fine weather. This " is very desireable, for all the Gaelic service is in " the field. We had some excellent ministers, " who were well helped in the discharge of their " duty."

These assemblages are often reprobated by inattentive observers, and censorious judges; and though it were hopeless to expect universal correctness, as some baser elements may mix in the purest stream, yet the general character was unimpeachable, and the general effects of those religious festivals were evidently beneficial on life and morals. Perhaps northern hospitality, so much vaunted, is at no time seen displayed to such an extent of disinterested kindness as on these occasions, for no man is so poor, but he will then lodge a sojourner for a night; and the conduct of the strangers is usually such, that to

entertain them is thought becoming even in the irreligious themselves, who, though they think their piety fanaticism, are not unwilling to hear the prayers they offer up in terms of lively gratitude for their benefactors.

We have seen how Mr Stewart succeeded in maintaining his position against the players, and he was not less successful in reforming the ordinary Christmas immoralities.

"I have been a good deal occupied of late," says he, "in holding diets of examination in the "church, and in preaching holiday sermons,—on "old Christmas, a missionary discourse, when "we got a respectable collection for the spread "of the gospel; and also on New-year's Day, to "young persons. On both these days, which "used to be devoted to noisy revelling on the "streets, and promiscuous parties for dancing "and drinking all night, I had the satisfaction "of seeing the town as quiet and regular as on "a Sabbath, and no public balls."

These pious attempts to suppress revellings, and the levities which infallibly ripen into confirmed distaste for religious duties and spiritual enjoyments, will appear to the carnal mind nothing better than the energies of an irrational zeal, exerting itself to extend the gloomy reign

of fanaticism over the provinces of harmless mirth and cheerful indulgence, which, it is alleged, belong of right to human nature. But while the world sneered and resented those aggressions, there was a greater than the world, no doubt, ready to say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" And it is to be hoped, that some of those for whose souls he so faithfully watched, though little sensible of their obligation at the time, and perhaps judging them an encroachment on their happiness, have long since viewed his strenuous exertions to keep them from the snare of the evil one in a proper light.

These exertions of Mr Stewart deserve the consideration of his brethren in office. It is not enough to denounce theatrical exhibitions, and carnal levities, from the pulpit. If we believe they are pernicious, ought we not to employ counteracting means? Preaching against sin is so much a thing of office, that it is little heeded by the world. But when we are seen carrying on an active warfare against it in private life, by a timely application to individuals in danger, to warn and to exhort them, it shews us to be in earnest, and, if done in the spirit of wisdom, it will impress. Sin may raise an outcry for a while, but meek perseverance will in due season reap its expected fruits. Mr Stewart took the only effectual method to correct pe-

riodical levities,—he substituted serious engagements, and left not the mind to the dangers of vacancy and idleness.

But, leaving Mr Stewart prosecuting the course of his public duties, in the manner of an able and faithful minister of Christ, we may with propriety advert to his domestic scene, on which he appeared with singular grace. As his family increased, a considerable portion of his time was allotted to their improvement; and having in Mrs Stewart a person of excellent judgment, and unwearied assiduity, to co-operate in the work of "training the young idea how to shoot," and in forming the plastic disposition of ingenuous youth to proper habits, the result was in proportion to the means. Mr Stewart had a very correct knowledge of human nature; and while he investigated its principles as a philosopher, he brought to philosophy the light of divine revelation, which gave to his researches a certainty otherwise unattainable. He had known human nature in its twofold condition,—first in the degenerate state, previous to renovation, and afterwards in its regenerated form; and, with this complex experience, was the better qualified to devise suitable modes of early culture. He had likewise a perfect habit of self-government, preserving his mind calm and unruffled to a degree rarely witnessed, so

that some, who had opportunity of seeing him for years together at home and abroad, confessed they had not beheld in him any irregularity of temper, or passionate expression of bad humour. His children, therefore, always saw in him the same authority of reason, and the same command of temper, and the same sanctity of parental character. How happily this must have operated in conciliating esteem is obvious, while in his manner there was nothing severe or repulsive, but rather a manifestation of kindliness never withheld, unless to signify moral disapprobation. Mrs Stewart, on the other hand, had the maternal tendernesses in a copious measure, but so tempered with wisdom, and sanctified by religion, that not a fault met with indulgence; and if good qualities were apparent, instead of diminishing them by praise, they were assigned their appropriate sphere of exercise, and left to shine apparently unheeded.

The united care of such guardians was not without its reward. In a numerous family, not a *spoiled child* was to be seen. There was entire subjection and subordination, with no apparent restraint; an air of happiness, and even gaiety, animated every face, and no domestic scene could be more delightful, than to witness the well-disciplined groupe. What Cecil says of the frequency of parents groaning under the

vices of their children, is true; but in many instances these very children have been first made to groan under the vices of their parents, being in infancy used for sport, and when their spoiled humours have made them troublesome, being then subjected to the alternations of *harshness* and *indulgence*, and both alike unreasonable and pernicious. Under such injudicious treatment, what wonder that many should embitter the peace of domestic life, and, as they grow up, multiply sorrow to their friends.

Mr Stewart had great skill in communicating knowledge, in a way adapted to varying ages and capacities; and when he found the demand made on his time, for domestic tuition, incompatible with attention to the duties of his ministry, he called in help, and, for several years previous to his removal from Dingwall, employed a governess and preceptor of approved qualifications, to carry on the business of education.

He had a deep sense of the importance of a right fulfilment of the parental obligation recognized at baptism, to train up children for the church; and it may easily be supposed the inculcation of religious truth was a serious part of education in his house. He did not think it enough to have the memory stored with right principles of religion; he inquired, he examin-

ed into the exercises of their minds, with respect to those principles; for he justly reckoned it to be a great inconsistency in a minister, to do less for promoting religion in the souls of his own family, than he does for the souls of strangers. He was aware, too, that the formation of character begins in early life, and hence his assiduous attention was directed to their habits, principles, and manners. Such knowledge as was essential to secular usefulness, he took care to have carefully instilled. And as he always calculated on an early removal from his family, of which many growing infirmities furnished painful admonition, he justly considered a proper education as affording to his children, if they should suffer an early bereavement of himself, the most probable means, under Providence, for procuring them an honourable sphere in life. In their proficiency he was not disappointed, nor will their future conduct, it is presumed, be unequal to the expectations formed from the first fruits yielded in youth.

In his intercourse with his parishioners, Mr Stewart was frank and accessible; but from his first settlement in Dingwall, he resolved to abstain from general society. In conformity with this plan, he rarely dined abroad, unless when officially necessary. There were a few families in the neighbourhood where he could introduce

his Lord, and there he occasionally spent an evening, and among these few, were found *some noble*, by whom his society was much prized. But, in general, he was rarely to be met with, unless at home, and in the engagements of professional duty. He possessed social talents of a high order, and which, if freely indulged, would have delighted any company, but might have proved a snare to himself among the irreligious, and he wisely withdrew from the pleasing danger. Of the proprieties of social life he was an accurate judge, and a diligent observer; and in his own deportment, both at home and abroad, was exhibited no inferior model of graceful manners, and unaffected politeness.

In his own family, his conversation was fraught with useful remark, and pious reflection; with confidential friends, he was rich even to affluence in the stores of profitable discourse; and the writer of this, having lived several years in his neighbourhood, will never lose the remembrance of the many happy hours spent in his company. Hardly a week passed without one evening at least devoted to his society; and though the only guest, as much treasure of communication was poured forth as though many had been present.

The advantages which he enjoyed in this free access to Mr Stewart, made him often revolve how much general good eminent ministers might

do to students in theology, by admitting them freely to their society and conversation, and by giving the sanction of their countenance to the well-disposed,—though, it must be confessed, few men possessed qualifications equal to his, either of a moral or intellectual kind.—He was alike fitted either to handle the topics of theology, discuss the theories of philosophy, or to expatiate on the beauties of classical learning; while neither did unseasonable merriment, nor the ebullitions of party feeling, degrade the sobriety of his discourse. In his company, one felt in a religious atmosphere, but it was clear, elastic, and enlivening to the spirits, calculated to mature virtuous sentiment, and to invite every generous and holy affection into wider expansion.

Notwithstanding the time devoted to family and ministerial duties, Mr Stewart found leisure to engage in several literary pursuits of considerable difficulty. Besides contributing occasional papers of much value to periodical works, he continued the cultivation of Gaelic, and at length published the fruits of his inquiries in his well-known Grammar. Of the progress of this important treatise, he gives this account to Mr D——:

"Though I could speak Gaelic in my infancy,

" yet, as I was many years unaccustomed to " use it, and my study was all in English, I " found considerable difficulty, when I began " to preach, in expressing myself with tolerable " accuracy or fluency. This constrained me to " examine the language grammatically, and en- " deavour to reduce it to rule. In this labour " I had very little assistance; for, though the " Gaelic was once a copious and cultivated " tongue, it has been degenerating into a rude " and irregular state since it became the speech " only of ignorant and illiterate people. My " notes gradually extended. At last, having " been confined a whole winter by a tedious re- " covery from a slow fever, I employed a part " of my time in correcting and arranging what " I had written; and I was encouraged to pub- " lish my lucubrations in the form of a short " Gaelic Grammar."

The first edition of the Grammar appeared in 1801; and with what industry of research, and patience of investigation, it was prepared, various proofs exist in the correspondence he carried on, for several preceding years, with the best-informed Gaelic scholars, on the philology of that language; and particularly with Dr Donald Smith, of whom mention has already been made.

When the Highland Society of London had

resolved to publish the Gaelic originals of Ossian's poems, the revisal was committed to Mr Stewart; and as the manuscripts, from age and neglect, were in a very mutilated state, it required no small labour, as well as ingenuity, to restore them. His emendations, the secretary informed him, were "literally adhered to by "the superintending committee." And, in addition to the grammatical province of the work, it was assigned him to furnish a view of the internal evidence of the authenticity of those famous poems. "I know none better qualified "to undertake this than yourself," wrote the secretary; "you will be animated to the task "by your regard to the literary honours of "Caledonia; and your labours will not only "confer an obligation on the Highland Society, "and the present age, but posterity will be "gratefully thankful for the zeal which excites "your talents to the undertaking."

Posterity, however, will owe to Mr Stewart its meed of gratitude and applause, for the revisal of works of higher inspiration, and better authenticated original, than those of Ossian,—we allude to the part he took in correcting the Gaelic translation of the Holy Scriptures. But before noticing his labours in this department, we shall here mention a proposal that was made to him by the Highland Society of Scotland

to undertake to supply the grand desideratum to Gaelic students,—a dictionary of the language.

In 1812, he had been induced to send out a new edition of his Grammar, greatly enlarged and improved. To encourage him in the work, Sir John M'Gregor Murray, Bart. a zealous and generous promoter of Gaelic literature, besides recommending the Grammar to public favour, as far as his influence extended, offered to take 600 copies for himself. As this work placed Mr Stewart among the first in the first rank of Gaelic scholars, in the estimation of all competent to judge, the Highland Society having already enrolled him among their honorary members, turned their eyes to him as the person best qualified to execute the Dictionary they had projected. Accordingly, the proposition was made to him by Sir John M'Gregor Murray, in the name of the Committee, with an offer of such remuneration, as, in Mr Stewart's family circumstances, was a very considerable inducement to close with the project. He did employ much prayer and deliberation, but at length declined it, chiefly, it appears, on the following ground.

"Here comes the reason," says he, after discussing the motives for and against it,

" that weighs most with me against the pro-
" posed undertaking, that is, the hold which
" these Gaelic studies take of my mind. If
" the task were an unpleasant one, unsuitable
" to my taste or inclination, I might force my-
" self to it as a matter of duty, to bestow upon
" it an allotted portion of time, and think no
" more of it till I sat down to it again. But
" the circumstance of its being congenial to
" my taste and habits of study, is what makes
" it a snare. What many would judge a for-
" tunate turn, as qualifying me for the task,
" and facilitating my progress, I must account
" the strongest objection to the undertaking.
" If, indeed, by temporal considerations, I
" should determine to give a portion (and it
" can be but a small portion) of my time to
" this work, and, as I proceed, find the bad
" consequences I apprehend realized, what am
" I to do then? Break off my labour in the
" middle, like a foolish builder, who had not
" counted the cost? If I should commence
" the work with the persuasion that my divine
" Master approved it, (and surely I ought to
" have this persuasion, or not meddle with it at
" all), then, when trials meet me, how should I
" know whether these were salutary antidotes
" against the natural effects of my secular em-
" ployment, to preserve my soul from catching

" harm, or intimations of God's displeasure, and
" warnings to leave off such a carnal occupation,
" lest a worse thing should befal me?"

Having resisted repeated solicitations, the work was committed to other hands, quite adequate, no doubt, to atchieve it. Some time after, when a specimen of its execution was circulated among the members of the Society, for their opinion, the principal conductor wrote to Mr Stewart, " That he had received his remarks
" on the printed specimen of the Gaelic Dic-
" tionary, and that they were, as he expected,
" more than worth all that had been received
" on the subject."

Upon the whole, a compilation for which the materials were so scanty, and the drudgery of application necessary to reduce them into form hardly credible to those who have not attempted something similar, was prudently declined by Mr Stewart at the time, and subsequent events more fully justified the propriety of his decision. If he had been moved by the phantom of a name, to have been the first to give a Grammar and a Lexicon to his native tongue*, might have held out to literary ambition a strong incentive to the enterprise. But he had

* He gave also a Primer, or Spelling-Book.

undertaken another work,—to feed the flock of Christ,—and this was dearer to him than all. In order to fulfil this office, he who was competent for the most splendid exertions in philology, was well pleased to sit down to the obscure but useful work of translating Tracts into the vernacular language.

He had begun his Gaelic publications at Moulin, with a translation of Dr Watt's Preservative, &c. &c. This was followed by the Shorter Catechism in Gaelic, printed at the expense of the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge. And besides the revisal of the metrical version of the *Gaelic* Psalms, that body also committed to him the comparing the Gaelic translation of the Prophetical Books with the original Hebrew,—a laborious task, which had become necessary from the frequent instances of disagreement that existed betwixt the original and version; and when a new revision of the entire Gaelic Bible was proposed, the distinguished scholar to whom it was committed, early applied for the criticisms of Mr Stewart. "I had a letter," says he, "in Decem-
"ber 1810, from Dr John Stuart, minister of
"Luss, in Dumbartonshire, requesting my re-
"marks, as he was now employed in revis-
"ing the translation. I believe philological
"studies are something of a hobby with me.

" If I can really be useful in that way, it is well, " but I need to remember that a hobby is al- " ways a snare,—a favourite may easily become " an idol."

While intent on philological researches himself, he loved to promote them in others; and as an instance of philanthropy, and the interest he particularly took in promoting the translation of the sacred scriptures into the languages of the heathen, it may be mentioned, that having observed, in the reports of the Baptist Bengal Missions, a letter of Dr Carey to Mr Fuller, complaining of the weak state of his eyes, and begging Mr Fuller to procure for him a Vander Hoogh's edition of the Hebrew Bible, which at that time was no easy matter, all communication with the Continent being intercepted, Mr Stewart immediately said to himself, " I wish " the worthy man had my copy,"—and sitting down, wrote, offering it, and desiring to be informed how to have it transmitted. The offer being gladly accepted, " I with great pleasure " followed the direction, wrote a letter of some " length to Carey, and sent off my parcel to " London. I dare say you remember my fa- " vourite Hebrew Bible in two volumes. I " parted with it, with something of the same " feelings that a pious parent might do with a favourite son, going on a mission to the hea-

" then,—with a little regret, but with much " good will."

His Hebrew missionary had a prosperous voyage to India, and proved the occasion of a very interesting correspondence with Mr Fuller and Dr Carey, whose communications were replete with intelligence dear to Mr Stewart, relating to the progress of the Christian kingdom. To what amount of missionary good his donation gave occasion, is only known to Him, who can trace a moral element through all its combinations, and assign its positive influence on the grand result to which all things tend,—the renovation of the world.

Amid these multiplied avocations in the parish, and family, and study, it may easily be conceived much labour must needs be expended, and it was hardly to be expected that application so intense, would not prove injurious to health. In fact, though naturally of a firm constitution, its solidity was somewhat relaxed by the assiduity of his literary pursuits at the university; and though his general health, with a few exceptions of occasional indisposition during his continuance at Moulin, was good, he was visited in 1807, two years after his settlement at Dingwall, with an illness of long continuance and severity; from which he rose not only with a countenance much faded, but with a constitu-

tion shorn of its former vigour, which it never afterwards regained. Previous to this, his eyes had suffered from the close habits of study in which he had indulged; but during the illness of that period, they were in so impaired a state, as to be unable to bear the action of light, and they continued ever after tender, and occasionally subject to partial defection.

In 1811, an internal disorder of a calculous kind, which had been for years gradually forming, began to manifest very alarming symptoms; causing at times the most excruciating pain, and more than once putting his life in imminent danger. On this occasion he had recourse to the distinguished skill of Dr Gregory, who entered into his case with all the earnestness of a friend, and manifested a solicitude for his recovery, that made a deep impression on the mind of his patient. His disorder for that time yielded to medical treatment; but though it admitted of alleviations and intervals of ease, it could not be radically removed. The symptoms from year to year indicated a more confirmed malady, which, after immense suffering, finally brought him to the grave. It ought, therefore, to be considered, in estimating his doings, that whatever he did for the last ten years of his life, was done amid pain and lassitude, with the rod

of disease always hanging over him, and very often painfully inflicted.

To suffer is the common lot of mortality. To suffer as a Christian, however, is not common; and the frame of mind maintained under painful and protracted maladies, puts the solidity of Christian character to a test, and generally affords a correct measure of its actual grace. Of Mr Stewart it may be said, that in the fiery trial, if there was some alloy to be purged away in the process of refinement, there remained a large amount of pure, substantial, imperishable worth of character, on which the flame wrought no diminution. That the Lord was with him in passing through the fire, the meek and exemplary patience with which he trode the painful way, abundantly manifested. Nor was it his object merely to suffer, with a resigned composure and fortitude, the will of God; he thought it became him to employ the most heart-searching scrutiny into his character and state, to ascertain the meaning of the rod; and how he improved seasons of bodily distress, the following memorandum found among his papers will shew.

" *March* 11*th*, 1807.—After the long indis-
" position by which I have been confined, and
" laid aside from duty, it is fit that I should now

" try to recollect the lessons which the Lord has
" been teaching me, and seek in prayer to have
" them impressed and maintained in my mind.
" 1. I have been led to see that I have been too
" remiss in my preparations for the pulpit, not
" taking due pains to study my subject, to study
" the scriptures in reference to it, to have my
" own heart affected with it, and to obtain the
" Holy Spirit's assistance in enforcing it upon
" my hearers. It is my earnest prayer that my
" gracious divine Master, in whose work I am
" engaged, if it be his good pleasure to send me
" out again into his vineyard, would dispose me
" to be more diligent in these respects for the
" future; that he would impress my heart with
" a deeper sense of the importance of the work,
" and of the value of the precious souls commit-
" ted to my care; and that he would strengthen
" my memory and enlighten my understanding,
" that I may understand the scriptures, and
" make a proper and seasonable application of
" them to the consciences of my hearers. It is
" my purpose, through the grace given to me,
" to take more time, and to write more of my
" discourses than formerly, as I think my ne-
" glect of writing has been one principal reason
" of my being superficial and barren in my il-
" lustrations and exhortations.

" 2. I have been led to consider how very

" deficient I am in the duty of public prayer, " having much formality in my spirit, much " barrenness and sameness in my matter and " expression. May the Lord give me a more " abundant portion of the spirit of prayer, that " I may be constant and fervent in that holy " exercise in secret, and so obtain a supply both " of the grace and gift of prayer in public, so " that I may lift up my own heart, and the hearts " of my people, to him who is the hearer of " prayer.

" 3. I have been led to a strong conviction, " that one of my greatest snares, and one of the " chief hindrances to usefulness in my inter- " course with my acquaintances, is complaisance. " I have too much desire to say only what is a- " greeable to others, rather than what may prove " useful to them. There may be a mixture of " timidity in this complaisance. I suspect there " is; may the Lord give me resolution to be " faithful in his cause, not to be over-anxious " to recommend myself to the good opinion of " worldly people, but rather be content to cause " some uneasiness, or give some offence, than " lose an opportunity of bearing my testimony " to the truth."

Bodily illness is a trial to all on whom it is imposed; but, perhaps, to a minister it comes with an additional aggravation. If he loves his

work, it is suspended; if he is concerned for the souls of those around him, they are abandoned to a variety of evils in the absence of his personal superintendence. The consciousness of being for the time useless, or the reflection of past unprofitableness, is not easily borne; and, alas! it too often happens, that offences will spring up among the people, as if to upbraid the inefficacy of his former labours, and loudly to call for redoubled vigour of action, while he must be *passive*. In such circumstances, a faithful minister does not want consolation in Christ; but who need wonder, if, at times, objects present themselves to his mind in colours of despondency? From such feelings Mr Stewart was not always exempt, as may be inferred from the following extract from a letter to Mr D———:

"*March* 1814.

"I wish I could cheer you with good news "from this little town and parish, but, alas! we "seem to be doing nothing, almost quite dead. "I was laid aside for some weeks, having been "seized with a topical complaint, which might "have proved fatal, no surgeon being at hand, "if I had not been mercifully directed and en- "abled to use the proper means for procuring "relief. I hoped that my own spirit had been

" softened and warned by this visitation, but, " alas! all was like the morning cloud. My " own vineyard I have not kept, and now it " is growing over with thorns. I have not a " heart nor a soul to employ in the honourable " service of the most honourable of all mas- " ters, but I am to try, at least, to employ my " silly body in the work, and am to begin this " day a course of parochial examination. Woes " me! for the day goeth away, the shadows of " the evening are stretched out over me, and " little or nothing done for him that loved me, " and gave himself for me,—unprofitable ser- " vant!"

To the same beloved friend, he wrote not long after:—

" *July* 1815.

" One apology for my allowing your much " esteemed letter of February to remain so " long unanswered, is, that I have been a tra- " veller of late. And were I a man of acute " observation, or of quick feeling, I might have " many interesting details to give of what I " should have seen and felt on my journey. My " excursion was not to the next country or pro- " vince, but to a place which people account " a " far country," whereas I found it situated but

" a few paces from home. You will understand
" me when I say, that my visit was to the re-
" gions on the banks of Jordan, the confines of
" the unseen world. I seemed to be led to the
" margin of the stream, and believed that, in a
" few days at farthest, I must cross the irre-
" meable flood. The prospect was extremely
" dark; I perceived almost nothing of the beau-
" ties of the promised land, or of that goodly
" mountain, even Lebanon. Like Hezekiah,
" I " wept sore." I could just with difficulty
" cast the care of my soul, and body, and fami-
" ly, on the great and good Shepherd of Israel,
" and, through his tender mercy, I was just kept
" from despondency. I was, however, sent
" back into the wilderness, and here I am still
" a sojourner and pilgrim in a foreign land. To
" speak without allegory,—in consequence of a
" long ride in a cold windy day in April, I was
" seized with a fever, which greatly increased
" my topical malady, accompanied with alarm-
" ing symptoms, which did not yield to medi-
" cine for several days; and, during that time,
" it appeared probable that the disorder would
" soon issue in inflammation, mortification, and
" dissolution. But the Lord was pleased to
" spare and restore me, to record his goodness.
" O for a heart to praise the Lord, for he is
" good, for his mercy endureth for ever!"

Besides the personal affliction laid on Mr Stewart, his sympathies were powerfully excited by the often indisposition of his beloved partner, who was scarce a step behind him in the path of those tribulations. The decease of her venerable father in 1812, was a trial of great magnitude to both, and occasioned a blank to them in that country, which they never expected to see filled up. The progress of this bereavement Mr Stewart thus describes, in a letter to his sister, dated,

" *Urquhart Manse, Sept.* 30. 1812.

" O my dear sister, what a subject have I " got now to write upon, if I could do it " justice! Our dear father, Mr Calder, is pro- " bably within a few hours of entering into the " joy of his Lord! On Thursday last he was " seized with an inflammation in the bowels. " A physician from Inverness applied various " remedies, besides copious bleeding, by which " the fever and worst symptoms were much a- " bated. Our revived hopes, however, began " to sink again, when we found the disease had " only changed its seat, and his suffering became " severe and constant. The dear venerable pa- " tient has suffered extreme pain, with no rest, " except what was obtained by laudanum. His " language, during his whole illness, was full

" of self-abasement, admiration and praise of
" his blessed Redeemer, and the most affec-
" tionate concern about his family and flock.
" This morning, particularly, after a pretty
" long sleep, being more free from pain, and a
" little revived, we were all drawn round his
" bed by hearing the sound of his voice; and
" then he went on a considerable time in the
" most heavenly strain. His mind was per-
" fectly clear, and his voice distinct. He told
" us of his good hope of a happy eternity,
" through the merits of his blessed Redeemer,—
" how much he had us all in his heart,—ad-
" dressed particularly his dear Margaret (Mrs
" Calder) and his daughters,—often blessed God
" for having given him such a partner and chil-
" dren,—and made most affectionate mention
" of his sons-in-law. He prayed fervently for
" his dear, dear James, who is far distant. To
" a respectable elder who was present, he gave
" it in charge to give his fondest love and
" blessings to his very dear flock, praying the
" Lord to send them the bread of life. He
" had said many such things during his ill-
" ness,—dwelt upon the beautiful and empha-
" tic image of Jacob's ladder,—observing how
" the blessed Jesus connected earth with hea-
" ven, and how prayers ascended, and blessings
" descended, through him, as the angels did

" upon the ladder. I had often read of death-
" bed scenes in magazines, but never witnessed
" such a one as this. Even my insensible heart
" was in some measure affected. It was a great
" privilege to be present, and especially to be a
" party in such a scene."

Several days after.

" After a long interval, I am at last able, and
" but just able, to resume my pen; for my head
" and fingers, and especially my eyes, are much
" fatigued and worn out. We all had the
" melancholy satisfaction of attending our dear
" revered father's purified spirit to the gates of
" heaven. He took his flight on the evening
" of the 1st October. A few minutes before,
" he desired Mr M'Intosh and me to withdraw
" and pray. We did so for some minutes in
" company with Mrs C———, and then re-
" turned in time to hear him pronounce a few
" words, and then see him breathe his last in a
" composed and placid manner. The ladies were
" much affected, but yet were mercifully sup-
" ported. The female attendants, kind and
" much attached women, were almost over-
" powered. The *late wake*, crowded with the
" first characters for piety in the whole country,
" mourning as orphans for their father, yet

" glorifying God on his behalf, was a scene un-
" commonly solemn and impressive. I cannot
" enter into a detail of the funeral, which was
" very numerously attended, and took place on
" Tuesday the 6th. The Presbytery appointed
" me to preach in the parish church the follow-
" ing Sabbath; an arduous duty, indeed, which,
" however, I was strengthened in some manner
" to perform *. From the first, it became a most
" interesting thought, who should be the man
" who would be promoted to take the pastoral
" charge of such a flock. None supposed that
" the patron, Mr Forbes of Culloden, would
" act otherwise than to grant the living to the
" solicitation of some worldly friend. Instead
" of that, as soon as he heard of the vacancy,
" he sent an assurance to the elders, that he
" would present none but a man perfectly
" agreeable to the parish. He resolutely refused
" many applications, declaring, that he would
" not gratify an individual at the expense of
" distressing hundreds; and when the people
" presented a petition to him in favour of Mr
" J. Macdonald of the Gaelic Chapel, Edinburgh,
" Culloden cheerfully complied, and gave them

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* The funeral sermon referred to in this letter, is printed in this volume.

" his letter to that effect. Mr Macdonald has " been written to, but his mind is not yet " known. All this is matter of astonishment, " joy, and praise, to the Lord's people through- " out the land *."

" He was removed to glory," says he, in another letter, " after seven days illness. This " last stage of his journey was indeed a very " painful one to the flesh, but he was blessed " with perfect composure of mind. While he " shewed the deepest self-abasement, yet the " love, the grace, the fulness, and glory of his " adorable Redeemer, were his constant theme. " Though torn with acute inward pain, he never " uttered a complaining word; not a feature of " his face indicated a struggle to suppress com- " plaint. The most serene, resplendent lumi- " nary of our horizon, is set. His affectionate, " bereaved parish, are left for a time as sheep " without a shepherd. His pious, venerable " widow, bowed down with infirmities and " broken health, is left a solitary pilgrim in the

* If a patron would compare the animating spectacle of a grateful people, expressing " joy and praise" for the gift of an acceptable pastor, with the discontented aspect of a congregation disappointed in what is to them the greatest solace of life,—surely he would pause and reflect before he made many sad for the interest of an individual, or for the pleasure of a few.

" wilderness. His tender attached daughters, " who doated on their father with almost more " than filial piety, have felt a pang in being se- " parated from him, which time alone can heal."

Thus sustaining no small fight of afflictions, and pressing on in the narrow way, Mr Stewart persevered in the arduous march of a holy life. We have hitherto drawn the materials for narration from letters he wrote to confidential friends. But in 1814, a new door of insight is opened into his character, by the commencement of a diary. It may be regretted, that so much of his active and most important life passed over without a single memorandum of his feelings and views being left on record, excepting what his letters exhibit; as it may easily be conceived, how interesting such memorials would have been in the days of his first illumination, and greatest usefulness, at Moulin. The writer of this, however, had occasion to know, that what deterred Mr Stewart from the practice of keeping these mental registers, was not the opinion of their inutility to the individual himself, for the practice itself, under proper management, he thought favourable to piety; and his having recourse to it himself at so late a period of life, has stamped upon it the approval of his deliberate judgment. He himself accounts for his late beginning, in the introduction to the first record.

" *May 9th*, 1814.—The recommendation and " the example of pious men have often suggest- " ed to me the utility of keeping a journal or " diary, as a short record of providences, expe- " riences, and employments. Different circum- " stances, not of a trivial kind, have hitherto " discouraged me from attempting it. Having " now a little more conveniency than at former " periods, I am prompted to try a short exer- " cise of this kind, by finding that a great many " occurrences have escaped my memory, which " ought to have been remembered and improv- " ed; and from a hope that the Lord may be " pleased to bless this exercise to my soul, by " giving me a more thorough knowledge of my- " self, and of his gracious and bountiful dealings " with me in my soul, in my body, my work, " and my earthly lot; in giving me a more dis- " tinct view of the manner in which my pre- " cious time is spent, and the vast important " work of the holy ministry prosecuted. Much " of my mortal life is past,—much of bodily " strength is gone,—my faculties are growing " less acute and vigorous,—the day is going " away, and the shadows of the evening are " stretched out. A growing malady warns me " that my stay here may not be long. Yet al- " most nothing is done or doing in this part of " my Lord's vineyard. O useless unprofitable

" servant that I am! May the Lord be pleased,
" in great mercy, and for his name's sake, to
" revive his work in my dull, sluggish, unfeel-
" ing soul. Till then, I can scarcely hope to
" see any good done, by my means, in this
" place.

" *May 8th, P. M.*—I had this day a call
" from a judicious tender-hearted Christian, of
" the parish of Urquhart. She sat and con-
" versed with me some time. She was under
" much concern about the state of her soul. I
" felt as if it were a most presumptuous thing
" in me to attempt to administer counsel or
" comfort to one so much my superior. I hope
" the Lord sent her for my good, to give her
" a greater concern in my spiritual welfare,
" and to engage her prayers more warmly in
" my behalf. O that the Lord may stir up
" many to pray for my poor soul, my family,
" and my flock!

" Had a strong proof, this evening, how
" wretchedly I can err when left to myself,
" and how much I need a constant monitor.
" Lord, teach me to watch and pray, and set
" thee always before me, and take the counsel
" thou offerest.

" *May 9th.*—Had some minutes affecting
" discourse, this morning, with my son, who

" came to my study before his brothers. He " is naturally tender-hearted and impressible; " but I must take care not to mistake natural " feeling for gracious impressions. When, O " Lord, will salvation come to this house? " When shall we, fond parents, see all our chil- " dren walking in the truth? When shall we " see one of them choosing the good part " which shall not be taken from them? Lord, " keep me this day watchful and circumspect; " teach me to improve occasions, and, if pos- " sible, to find occasion of speaking a word " for Christ, of reminding sinners of their great " concern.

" My time a good deal occupied with ordi- " nary secular matters. I need to learn to keep " a strict guard over myself, and to set the Lord " before me in all such matters, as my heart is " so ready to be untuned and carnalized. Had " an agreeable meeting at D—— M———'s in " the evening: Question from 2 Cor. vi. 17. 18. " practical and interesting; my own heart very " cold and lifeless. Lord, breathe, breathe on " it without ceasing, and make me to pray with- " out ceasing; else the feeble spark of life will " not burn at all!

" *May* 11*th*.—This morning sound in bodily " health, free of pain or trouble, but cold and " lifeless in heart. No spirituality do I ever feel,

" unless when under some painful feeling, some
" chastening from the hand of God, or some
" sharp reproof from my conscience. Of all
" *means*, the rod, applied not to my body but
" to my mind, has ever proved the most effec-
" tual to rouse and spiritualize my dull affec-
" tions, and stir up any thing like a spirit of
" supplication. But the moment the rod is re-
" moved, I grow cold like iron out of the fur-
" nace. When, when shall it be otherwise with
" me? Lord, perfect that which concerneth me,
" for thy great name's sake. I endeavoured
" this morning, but I know not with what suc-
" cess, to lay hold on a promise that was brought
" to my view. Long has the Lord waited for
" me with wonderful patience and condescen-
" sion; may he teach me and enable me to wait
" only on him, and to " exalt him" in my heart,
" speech, and behaviour, " that he may have
" mercy upon me."

" This day visited my much-respected and
" beloved parent Mrs C.; was refreshed and
" humbled with her conversation. She had
" newly received a second letter from her belov-
" ed son, written a few days after he had got
" the first accounts of his revered father's death.
" His letter was full of filial sorrow, and the
" most affectionate condolence. He is a dear

" tender-hearted youth, " a child of many pray-
" ers and tears," like St Augustine; and like
" him must be saved. My own mind was un-
" usually empty and unemployed in the way;
" much precious time lost. May the Lord for-
" give, and teach me to improve solitude.

" *May* 12*th.*—An acquaintance called on me
" to-day, to represent the case of a neighbour
" of his own, who had for some time made a
" credible profession of religion, but for some
" months back has been falling into a habit of
" drinking, and wished me to take an early op-
" portunity of admonishing him. I think it is
" my duty to do so, and would earnestly im-
" plore the Lord's direction that I may do it
" faithfully and in love, and that it may be ac-
" companied with the divine blessing. I have
" been busied this day about common things,
" my mind vacant and unedified. Lord, enable
" me now to close the day with thyself.

" *May* 16*th.*—Rode out in the forenoon—the
" rest of the day employed in ordinary matters
" —nothing done directly for Christ. This is
" a shameful loss of precious time. I have of-
" ten resolved, and I desire to repeat my reso-
" lution in the presence of Jesus, " whose
" I am, and whom I" am bound by a thousand
" obligations to " serve," never to let a whole
" day pass without something said, or written,

" or done, to spread the savour of Christ's name,
" to stir up some spiritual grace in the souls of
" others, or in my own. Lord, pardon, for thy
" mercy's sake, my inexcusable negligence in
" this respect, and rouse me to greater careful-
" ness in future!

" *May 20th.*—Visited ———, whom I found
" still in a state of distress and discouragement,
" complaining, that though she was persuaded
" the promises were free and full, yet she was
" not able to lay hold on them for herself. She
" complains sorely of hardness, coldness, and
" insensibility; and, above all, an evil heart of
" unbelief. She acknowledged she was the bet-
" ter of seeing a person with whom she could
" converse freely. Though she cannot at pre-
" sent rejoice in the Lord, yet she looks steadily
" towards him as the God of her salvation. I
" have no doubt that the Lord is thus preparing
" her for a fuller manifestation of himself, and
" that he will soon give her a garment of praise
" for a spirit of heaviness.

" *May 21st.*—Having finished my studying
" and writing for next Lord's day, I purpose,
" if the Lord permit, to employ some hours of
" this afternoon (as the day that I am least in-
" terrupted) in examination, humiliation, and
" prayer, particularly in reference to the state
" of my poor, lifeless, senseless soul, my family,

" and my parish. It is an exercise which I " have sadly neglected, but which I need ex- " ceedingly. I know it is difficult and painful. " Lord, enable me to begin it, and to pursue " it with a single eye to spiritual benefit, and " to thy glory. O search thou me, and know " my heart!

" *Evening.*—Having begun what I intended " for this day's exercise, with prayer for the " divine presence and blessing, and read the " 139th Psalm, I was interrupted by a man " being introduced by one of the elders, as un- " der great trouble of mind. He is an old man " of decent life and behaviour, has been for some " weeks under an increasing concern about his " soul's state, and is often distressed with alarm- " ing fears. Conversed with him some time; " then sent for D—— M———, elder, and we " conversed with him a considerable time toge- " ther, endeavouring to lead him to a more dis- " tinct view of sin, the true ground of fear, and " then to look to Christ as the free and all-suffi- " cient Saviour of sinners. D—— M——— " prayed with him before parting. This inter- " view occupied the greater part of the forenoon. " Any other Saturday, I should have found it " an unseasonable interruption; but this day, " the Lord, foreseeing this engagement, had led " me to finish my studies, so that I had some

" hours to spare. Persons applying for spiritual
" advice is almost a new thing here. May the
" Lord grant that this may turn to good, and
" that it may be the beginning of a glorious
" harvest, to the praise of his free sovereign
" grace, who worketh when, and where, and
" how he pleaseth!

" *May 24th.*—Last night I had a return of
" an alarming complaint to which I have been
" long subject. After trying the usual expe-
" dients for relief with little effect, I had re-
" course at last to an expedient that succeeded.
" I cried to the Lord for help; he graciously
" heard me, and I succeeded to a wish. I was
" immediately relieved, and all the trouble-
" some symptoms abated in the course of the
" day.—How plainly does the Lord warn me
" to consider my latter end, and not to reckon
" upon length of days! O that he would be
" pleased to exert his power, and shew me his
" mercy, by releasing my poor soul in like
" manner from deadness and inactivity! May
" this warning rouse me to more constant at-
" tention and faithfulness in duty, now that
" the shadows of the evening are stretched
" out.

" *May 25th.*—Occupied about ordinary mat-
" ters—no spiritual good received or imparted—
" no progress made in journeying toward heaven

" —nothing done for the cause of Christ, or the " glory of God, a sad return for life preserved, " and health restored! Lord, pardon my wretch- " ed unprofitableness—make me dread to spend " another day so.

" *May* 28*th*.—Studied the greater part of " the day;—was greatly affected with a letter " received in the morning, from my dear and " valuable brother, Mr J—— S——— of " B——— S——. It was singularly season- " able, and I can scarcely say whether it was " more calculated to encourage or to humble " me. I must believe, as my dear brother " writes, that many Christian friends are at- " tached to me, and concerned about me, and " that there was a time when the Lord did " make his own word precious to some through " my very poor and feeble ministry. But, alas! " how is the gold become dim! Woes me, that " I sojourn in Mesech! O that I knew where I " might find Him!

" *May* 30*th*.—In reading the scriptures this " morning, and seeking a promise for the day, " I am directed to Joel ii. 21—27. particularly " verses 21, 27. " The Lord will do great things, " and my people shall never be ashamed." May " the Spirit impress it, enable me to lay hold, " and fulfil——

" *June* 13*th*.—Last week I became acquaint-

" ed with Mr C———, a pious valuable man,
" residing in England. I heard him, with much
" satisfaction, give a private lecture one even-
" ing, and preach another evening in the Town
" Hall. I wish that my hands were often
" strengthened by such visitors. I have to re-
" cord the goodness of my bountiful Lord in
" strengthening me yesterday in body and spi-
" rit, in the whole public service of the day.
" To him be all the glory. Visited three women
" bed-rid.

" *June* 14*th.*—Took a ride to Munlochy and
" Inverness on business. Returned in the even-
" ing safe, but fatigued. In Inverness, unex-
" pectedly met Mr C———, who had been dis-
" appointed. Exchanged Christian affectionate
" salutations with him, and took leave, not ex-
" pecting to see him again in this world.

" *June* 15*th.*—Most agreeably surprised to-
" day, with hearing that a horse had been sent
" for Mr C———, and that he was expected
" here to-day. About two o'clock had a call
" from the excellent man, and his dear amiable
" cousin Miss C———. Heard him preach
" in the evening in the hall with singular
" power. Assuredly this man of God has been
" sent on a special message to Dingwall, and
" particularly to me. O that the Lord would
" be pleased to send a portion of the same

" spirit and gift to my dull worthless soul! I " am often tempted to ask, " Can the Lord do " such a thing? Can he revive my dead in- " sensible heart?" Lord, rebuke me for my un- " belief, and quicken me with thy Spirit, be- " fore the day pass entirely away, and the " night come upon me, wherein no man can " work.

" *June* 16*th.*—I am disappointed of hearing " dear Mr C——— this evening, for the last " time. His visit to this town, and particular- " ly his unexpected return from Inverness, is " surely a token to Dingwall, either of mercy " or of judgment. I may say the same of my- " self. O! may the Lord bless his dear servant's " ministration to some,—to many! What a " loud reproof to my careless, heartless, unpro- " fitable services! O! for the breath of heaven! " Awake, O north wind! and come, thou " south! Amen.

" *July* 13*th.*—After a long suspension of my " notes, I am admonished to endeavour to re- " sume them. A faithful and seasonable re- " proof from my conscience, relative to the " particular state of my soul, particularly as to " the exercise of prayer, warns me, that it is " highly needful to search and try my ways. " O! may I be enabled to attend and profit " by the Lord's rebuke, before his chastening

" hand fall heavy upon me. I purpose, if the " Lord permit, to employ the greater part of " this day in retirement, to examine the state " of my miserable heart. Lord! do give me " light and understanding to perceive my real " state, for I fear I have been much misled by " the kindness, and the too favourable opinion " of others concerning me.

" After spending the morning and forenoon " in my room, I have reason to bless the Lord " for some little access to himself, which he " was pleased to grant me, and one or two mo- " mentary meltings of heart; such as to give " me a very slight notion of what it is to have " fellowship with God, and pour out the heart " before him. This I had, particularly in " pleading for my very dear children. Lord, " continue, review, increase this secret com- " munion with thyself,—no life, no thriving " without it.

" *July* 31*st*.—Had felt my breast a little in- " flamed and uneasy in the night, and was con- " cerned how I should make out the service of " the day, and having again to preach to-mor- " row at ———. The Lord strengthened me " in person and spirit. I was supported in an " ordinary measure in Gaelic, and more so in " the English; and when I had finished, I felt " my breast quite well, and my voice sound.

" Well may I say, " the Lord is my helper, I " will trust in him, and not be afraid." "

These memorials are short, and interspersed in the original with marks and references, in a character known only to himself. They comprise a space not exceeding three months, and not diversified with any event of importance. His reason for discontinuing them is not known; but whatever induced him to leave off, the little he has given, shews a heart alive to the great concerns of the soul; breathing after the highest attainments in Christian experience, and groaning under the consciousness of deplored infirmities and defects in character, perceptible only to himself, and to his God.

Perhaps some may be led to conceive less favourably of the extent of his attainments in grace, on finding him use the language of complaint oftener than that of approbation, in judging of himself. But to the consideration of such, we would recommend the following sentiments of one of the greatest masters of human reason that has ever appeared in the world; or, if a higher authority be sought, let the 7th chapter of Romans be seriously examined.

" Grace, and the love of God, in the most " eminent saints in this world, is truly very

" little in comparison with what it ought to be;
" because, the highest love that ever any at-
" tain to in this life, is poor, cold, exceeding
" low, and not worthy to be named, in com-
" parison of what our obligations appear to be,
" from the joint consideration of these two
" things, viz. 1. The reason God has given us
" to love him, in the manifestations he has
" made of his infinite glory, in his word, and
" in his works; and particularly the gospel of
" his Son, and what he has done for sinful man
" by him. And, 2. The capacity there is in the
" soul of man, by those intellectual faculties
" which God has given it, of seeing and un-
" derstanding those reasons which God has
" given us to love him. How small, indeed,
" is the love of the most eminent saint on earth,
" in comparison of what these things jointly con-
" sidered do require. And this grace tends to
" convince men of, and especially eminent grace;
" for grace is of the nature of light, and brings
" truth to view. And therefore, he that has
" much grace, apprehends, much more than
" others, that great height to which his love
" ought to ascend; and he sees, better than
" others, how little a way he has risen towards
" that height. And therefore, estimating his love
" by the whole height of his duty, hence it ap-
" pears astonishingly little and low in his eyes.

" And the eminent saint having such a convic-
" tion of the high degree in which he ought to
" love God, this shews him not only the littleness
" of his grace, but the greatness of his remaining
" corruption. It appears exceedingly abominable
" to him, that Christ should be loved so little,
" and thanked so little, for his dying love; it is
" in his eyes hateful ingratitude.

" And then the increase of grace has a ten-
" dency another way to cause the saints to think
" their deformity vastly more than their good;
" it not only tends to convince them their cor-
" ruption is much greater than their goodness,
" which is indeed the case, but it also tends to
" cause the deformity that there is in the least
" sin, or the least degree of corruption, to ap-
" pear so great, as vastly to outweigh all the
" beauty there is in their greatest holiness; for
" this also is indeed the case.

" True grace is of that nature, that the more
" a person has of it, with remaining corruption,
" the less does his goodness and holiness ap-
" pear, in proportion to his deformity, in the
" sin that now appears in his heart, and in the
" abominable defects of his highest and best af-
" fections and brightest experiences."

If the private records of Mr Stewart had re-
presented him reviewing with complacency his

own acquirements, who would not have disesteemed him, and ranked him very low in the kingdom of God? What exalts character is humility,—and that grace dwelt in him richly. He saw more clearly than most men, the intermixture of evil in things seemingly good; and from the comprehensive views he took of duty, the greatest performances of his best times appeared exceedingly little, and unequal to the motives which he at all times possessed. But self-abasement is not incompatible with a sense of safety, or a frame of habitual joy; for it is the privilege of all who fully enter into the grace of the gospel method of salvation, that with the deepest self-abhorrence, they have somewhat wherein to glory, and that is, Christ. And had we Mr Stewart's judgment of faith on record, as we have his judgment of sense, we should doubtless find his heart as full of glorying, as we have seen it depressed with conscious defects. And while he saw nothing in himself corresponding to the holiness of his desires, and the extent of his obligations, in Christ he could say, "I am complete."

To overlook self-unworthiness, fosters a ruinous self-complacency, hateful in the sight of Heaven;—to dwell on it perpetually, without "looking unto Jesus" in the joy of believing, is not more unfavourable to sanctification, than injurious to peace. What Milner observes con-

cerning a sermon of Grossteste, is worthy of remark; that "it was well calculated to humble "the proud, but had very little to encourage "the sincere; for that he seemed to have no "idea of the attainment of a state of solid peace "and joy." This he attributes to his not knowing "the just nature of the Christian article of "justification by Jesus Christ the Righteous." This, however, Mr Stewart not only knew himself, but was the instrument of communicating the knowledge of it to many others; and, therefore, though a sense of manifold short-comings caused sorrow, in His righteousness he enjoyed exalted peace and solid comfort, the *sense* of which, however, was to him, as well as to others, liable to be modified by changes in the medium of perception; and it generally happens, that diaries are most resorted to, not in seasons of clear, but of doubtful perception. Hence, most memorials of that kind exhibit chiefly the darker shades of experience.

The following sentiments, contained in a letter written several years later than those notes in his diary, breathe the same spirit of conscious unworthiness and self-abasement.

"When I see such living examples as "M'L———, and the zealous ministers, and "some private Christians around me, I find my-"self entirely eclipsed, and unworthy of any

" place in the system. I think this was im-
" pressed on me with some force in my late ill-
" ness. I saw myself a wretchedly unprofitable
" servant, a withered branch, fit only for burn-
" ing. I have read of eminent Christians hav-
" ing a strong sense of their own unworthiness;
" and I have been inclined to think that their
" state was far otherwise than they themselves
" apprehended. It is possible that my partial
" friends may fancy that to be my case. But it
" is all a mistake. I surely believed that expe-
" rienced Christians who had the worst opinion
" of themselves, judged truly, whatever others
" might think; and so I believe concerning
" myself, that the worst opinion I can have of
" my own heart, is short of the truth, however
" others may form a different opinion. In our
" present pilgrimage, I believe the valley of hu-
" miliation is the most advantageous point of
" view, from which to behold the Sun of righ-
" teousness in his benign and majestic splendour,
" as well as in his purifying and comforting in-
" fluence."

After the death of Mr Calder, the domestic circle of Mr Stewart was frequently enriched with the addition of Mrs C. whose conversation would have been accounted a great acquisition to any society capable of relishing " the things of the Spirit."

Beyond the Christian scene in his own house, he diffused the benefit of his knowledge and advice to many individuals, both in the neighbourhood and at a distance; keeping up a wider epistolary intercourse, than perhaps a prudent regard to the circumstances of his own impaired health might seem to justify. That survivors, however, may yet benefit by his exertion, we shall here insert a few of the letters written posterior to the date of his diary.

In 1815, he received a letter from a gentleman in Edinburgh, with whom a College intimacy had subsisted at St Andrews; and who, like himself, had been led to embrace other views of divine truth, than they ever thought to entertain in those juvenile days. This gentleman having met with his Moulin narrative, not long after he had begun to inquire seriously into revealed truth, immediately opened a correspondence with Mr S. on the subject of religion, and claimed a renewal of ancient friendship on a new and spiritual ground. To this proposal Mr Stewart gladly consented, and thus was restored a connection which had a considerable influence on the comfort and circumstances of his future years. The first letter Mr Stewart wrote to his new correspondent, is dated

Dingwall, 28th August, 1815.

" My dear Sir,

" Few things indeed could have given me " more delightful surprise than your much es- " teemed letter, received a few days ago.

" I well remember the agreeable days that " we enjoyed together in St Andrews,—how " many? thirty years ago and upwards? And " I think the only time since that I have had " the pleasure of seeing you, was once at Dun- " keld House. In this large portion of our " mortal life, my course has been a very cir- " cumscribed one. I have paced slowly through " a small corner of the world, while you have " probably occupied a wider range, correspond- " ing to your talents and fortune,—seen much " of the world, and been engaged in its busier " scenes. Well, I desire to praise God on your " account, that he has shewed you the world's " vanity, and inclined you to seek for yourself " and your dear young ones, a better inheri- " tance,—a more lasting and satisfactory por- " tion. And I most affectionately hope, and, " so far as my feeble prayers can avail, I do " earnestly pray, that he who has turned your " attention and desire toward himself, may " be your guide and instructor, and lead you " to the full knowledge " of the truth as it is " in Jesus." The field of revelation is indeed

" wide, and contains a great variety of objects, " and a vast fund of interesting entertainment " to a sanctified mind. But the plan of re- " demption, though immensely grand, is sim- " ple, and requires no high cultivation of intel- " lect to comprehend it, but only a humble " mind, willing to receive it. And if you, my " dear Sir,—and I would always include the " dear partner of your joys and cares,—possess " this grand requisite, the way lies open before " you,—" Search the scriptures, for in them " ye think ye have eternal life, and they are " they which testify of Jesus," John v. 39. The " word of God reveals some things so strange, " and some so unpalatable to our nature, that " divine teaching is needful to make us appre- " hend, and fully acquiesce, in their truth and " propriety. This divine teaching is to be ob- " tained by prayer. Every thing relative to " the reception of gospel truth, the subjection " of the will to the authority of God, and " thankful acquiescence in the prescribed me- " thod of salvation, are all ascribed in the Bible " to the influence of the Holy Spirit on the " soul. And this influence is freely promised " to them that humbly and sincerely ask it. " " If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts " to your children, *how much more* shall your " heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them

" that ask him," Luke xi. 13. I am well aware " how difficult an attempt it is for a man who " has lived esteemed by the world, to withdraw " from its ensnaring company, its fashions and " its habits. Old friends, connections, and com- " panions, will warmly oppose such a separa- " tion. A man who quits the " broad road," " and enters the " narrow way," must expect " to be counted singular, for, in fact, he will be " singular; and no little resolution is required " to bear the imputation of singularity, to brave " " the world's loud laugh." But the grace of " Christian fortitude will support a man under " any trial, and carry him safely through. You " are not ignorant of what the scripture incul- " cates with respect to separation from the " world, 2 Cor. vi. 17. John xv. 19. Rom. " xii. 2.

" Since receiving your letter, the last report " of the Edinburgh Bible Society came into " my hands. One of the first things which " struck my eye with pleasure, was to see your " name added to the list of vice-presidents, and " that you filled the chair at last general meet- " ing. This leads me to think, that you must " have already formed an acquaintance with " men of enlightened and pious minds, whether " clergymen or others, in Edinburgh, who will " be happy to cultivate your friendship, and

" who will be of much more service in aiding
" your inquiries than ever I could be. But if
" you were not always acquainted with men of
" such a character, I confess I should feel ex-
" ceedingly desirous to answer your and Mrs
" ——'s kind and gratifying invitation, and fly
" by land or sea to your happy mansion, to
" embrace my old, or rather my new friend,
" and endeavour to strengthen our common
" faith and hope in the blessed gospel of our
" Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But the
" wish is all I dare indulge. Though my ordi-
" nary health is such as to allow my engaging
" in ordinary duty at home, yet I cannot ven-
" ture to move a step from home. But if you
" honour me with your correspondence, it will
" give me pleasure to hear what you may be
" pleased to communicate, and to answer as I
" may be enabled to do. In reference to my
" letter to Mr Black, on the state of religion in
" the parish of Moulin, as you are pleased to
" say that you think it calculated to be useful,
" I have no objection whatever to its being re-
" printed. But, unless you have some special
" reasons for wishing the names to be suppress-
" ed, I think it would be better to allow them
" to remain. Names and dates give a stamp of
" authenticity, and create an interest in the per-
" usal, which would be lessened if these were

" wanting. I have no wish at all to withdraw " my testimony to the facts narrated, or the " doctrine maintained in that letter, but am " ready to renew and confirm my testimony to " both, now after an interval of thirteen years " from the publication of the last impression. " And it occurs to me, that the effect of the " narrative might be increased by my adding a " short paragraph of that kind, either by way " of preface or postscript, to the next impres- " sion. If Mrs —— and you think it best to " get a small number printed in this way for " gratuitous distribution, you have my full con- " sent, and my earnest wishes that your chari- " table purpose may be abundantly blessed, and " your benevolent desires richly gratified.

" I remember your three brothers well, all of " them promising young men. I did not know, " till your letter informed me, that they were " all removed by death, and yourself the only " representative of a once flourishing family. " A young generation is now springing up un- " der your wing. From what I already know " of the parents, I feel no common interest in " the children. What a blessing to them to " have parents who are anxious to " bring them " up in the nurture and admonition of the " Lord!" The education of youth, in the en- " larged sense of the word, is the most impor-

" tant of all arts. Much has been written on
" the subject; and I have no doubt that Mrs
" —— and you have already studied it very
" seriously. Of female writers on education,
" Mrs Hannah More is the safest guide, as she
" takes the word of God for her own guide.
" In the training of children, rewards and pu-
" nishments must be employed to a certain ex-
" tent, corresponding to the good or faulty be-
" haviour of the child. And nothing is more
" natural than for children to conceive, as they
" are often expressly taught, that the very same
" system of rewards and punishments, propor-
" tioned to merit and demerit, prevails, without
" any modification, in God's moral government
" of his creatures. This is the old covenant of
" works, to which human nature, fallen as it is,
" strongly and continually leans. This system
" suited admirably well man's original state of
" innocence and holiness. But it would now
" be a most inapplicable and useless rule to ad-
" dress to a weak, depraved, condemned sinner,
" " If you do well, if you obey the holy law of
" your Creator, you shall be rewarded; but if
" you disobey, you shall be punished; be good,
" and you shall be happy." The propositions
" are true, but they are truths of no avail to a
" sinner. What a mercy to us that our salva-
" tion is secured by a " better covenant, esta-

" blished upon better promises!" Heb. viii. 6. " Indeed, we need to have perpetual recourse to " that better covenant, and to impress on our- " selves, as well as on our children, that our only " hopes of pardon, acceptance, reward, or future " happiness, are to be founded on the merits of " another, not on our own; on the sufficient " righteousness of Christ, our Surety and Me- " diator, not on our own, which is of no avail " to our justification, Phil. iii. 8, 9. Rom. iii. " 21, 24.; that all we hope is from the free love, " the unmerited favour, of God our Saviour; " yet that the just apprehension, the firm belief " of such free love and mercy, cannot fail to " gain our love in return, and engage us, by " the strongest and most endearing ties, " to " live not to ourselves, but to him who loved " us, and gave himself for us; who died for us, " and rose again," 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Faith, thus " working by love, is the principle of the Chris- " tian life. A more efficient principle, or a more " delightful exercise, can no where be found on " earth or in heaven. I ought to feel no ordi- " nary interest in the bringing up of children. " I have no fewer than nine of them under my " care,—a heavy burden, which I should never " have known how to sustain, if the Lord had " not blessed me with a partner who is fully as " solicitous, and much more able than myself,

" to guide their childhood, and inform their " young minds. My eldest son is at his stu- " dies, the rest are under private tuition at " home."

This letter was soon followed by another more open and confidential; and their friendship having been consolidated by a visit of Mr ——— to Dingwall not long after, an unbroken intimacy subsisted until death bade the connection for a while to cease.

The interview mentioned took place in 1816, in the course of which year, the following letters were written by Mr Stewart:

" My very dear Sir, *October* 17.

" We all rejoiced very sincerely on learning, " from your much esteemed letters, that you " had regained in safety your beloved family, " and found them well, and delighted, I am " sure, at your return. It gives Mrs Stewart " and me heartfelt pleasure to find ourselves " joined to dear Mrs ——— and you in the " bonds of Christian friendship; and we hope " the union will be not only lasting, but ever- " lasting.

" The packet with the printed pamphlets, " came to hand at the same time with your fa- " vour of the 7th. I have given them both a

" hasty perusal, comparing them with Dr " C———'s Address. I knew something of " W——— before, having seen his Letters on " Methodism. His pamphlet is much in the " same spirit, dogmatical, overbearing, and ill- " tempered; very ill calculated indeed to en- " lighten or convince an opponent. Even where " his tenets are right, his manner is more repul- " sive than conciliatory. B———'s pamphlet " is quite a contrast to W———'s, clear, cor- " rect, temperate, and friendly. It is well fit- " ted to be useful not only to Dr C———, but " to all who read it.

" It appears to me that Dr C——— had " found, or imagined, that an opinion prevailed " among his people, that till a man has distinct- " ly ascertained, to his own satisfaction, that he " is possessed of true faith, he is under no obli- " gation to break off his sins, or " maintain good " works." Dr C——— justly conceives such " an opinion to be erroneous and dangerous; but " I think he has mistaken the proper way of " applying the remedy. He is aware that the " law is to be our schoolmaster, to bring us to " Christ. And on this ground he urges obe- " dience to its precepts, in order that a sinner " may thereby become disposed and prepared " to receive the free offer of salvation in the " gospel; whereas, the strictness and spirituali-

" ty of the law are to be held forth to convince
" men of their sin, to shew them that they never
" did and never can keep it, but are already
" condemned by it, and so to render them will-
" ing to accept of mercy as a free unmerited fa-
" vour. This willingness is not produced by a
" consciousness of struggling with sin, but from
" a conviction that they are dead in trespasses
" and sins, and that they never can make one
" successful struggle against the inward power
" of sin in the heart, without being created a-
" new by the Spirit of God, through faith in
" his Son.

" I think Dr C——— is certainly mistaken
" in supposing, that a man may be sincerely
" and actively inquiring after the way of ac-
" ceptance with a holy and righteous God, and
" yet may be at the same time going on, con-
" tentedly, in the practice of known sin. If he
" is anxious for pardon, he must be uneasy
" under the dread of punishment; and if he be
" desirous to be freed from the power of sin, he
" must be uneasy under its dominion. Com-
" monly, the first step of the Spirit's work in
" the soul, is to convince of sin; so that the
" sinner is " pricked in his heart;" involuntari-
" ly cries out, " What shall I do to be saved?"
" and then is led to embrace Jesus Christ,
" freely offered in the gospel. But there

" are diversities of operations, and I believe
" there are some, who, in the first instance, have
" their " understanding enlightened" to per-
" ceive the truth, to see the freeness and suita-
" bleness of the great salvation wrought out by
" Christ, the necessity of being interested in
" that salvation, and that this is to be obtained
" only and simply by believing the truth; while
" there is no *powerful* application of these doc-
" trines to their own souls, no *deep* sorrow or
" humiliation for sin, no *strong* earnest long-
" ings of the soul after the favour of God, and
" the privileges of his children. I would not
" deny such light came from heaven, but it is
" only a kind of moon-light, and does not pos-
" sess the animating warmth of the sun-beam.
" How desireable is it to have the heart warmed,
" and the affections kindled, with " the love
" of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy
" Ghost!" This should be our constant prayer;
" and it is by means of contemplating the love
" of God in Christ, that we may expect to
" have this holy affection kindled and increased
" in our own souls. I am really writing with-
" out order or premeditation, so I hope you
" will excuse the want of connection. I thank
" you sincerely for B——'s pamphlet. I would
" thank the writer, if I knew him. Pray,
" what is he? I remember drawing up a

" paper on the subject of saving faith, corre-
" sponding exactly to Mr B——'s view of it,
" which was inserted in the Edinburgh Moni-
" tor for January and August 1807. Many
" pious persons are not satisfied with this view,
" and seem to fear that the grace of faith is de-
" graded by reducing it to believing, just as
" moralists fear that salvation is degraded by
" connecting it with faith alone."

To the same.

" My dear Sir, *3d December* 1816.

" I have to thank you for sundry communi-
" cations. It was very good in you to send me
" the Glasgow pamphlet in defence of Dr C. On
" a subject which has attracted so much notice,
" one is curious to know what is said further.
" The controversy warms as it proceeds; but
" though the heat increases, it does not follow
" that the light increases also. Mr B.'s was a
" luminous Essay, and threw light on the sub-
" ject of discussion. The advocate for Dr C.
" appears rather to throw a shade upon it. He
" seems not to understand the distinction be-
" tween the workings of natural conscience,
" and the operations of true peace. He has
" learned what the fundamental doctrines of
" the gospel are, but he errs in applying them

" for the conviction and conversion of sinners.
" He appears to me to be a man who, attracted
" by the charms of Dr C.'s eloquence, has
" learned from his preaching, for the first time,
" the leading points of orthodoxy, but has not
" yet felt their power upon his heart. He is a
" convert to Dr C.'s creed, but not converted
" so as to "become as a little child." He likes
" to have every thing rational and free of mys-
" tery, and is much displeased at finding fault
" with his favourite preacher. I am sure he
" maintains some things in his pamphlet which
" Dr C. would not assert, for he knows better.
" See the first line of page 15. " Is not faith
" imparted to the mind, just as men deserve
" it?" One who is capable of expressing him-
" self in this manner, must be a stranger to the
" free grace of God in the gospel. Surely Dr
" C. " has not so learned Christ." It is vain to
" attempt to try to divest the gospel of mys-
" tery. Our Lord speaks of " the mysteries of
" the kingdom;" and the apostle Paul " of the
" mystery of the gospel," " the mystery of faith,"
" " the mystery of godliness," &c. See Cruden's
" Concordance, under the word mystery, and
" the judicious explanation there given of the
" term. The apostle farther speaks of things
" that are " unsearchable, unspeakable," &c.
" Such things can never be made plain and in-

" telligible to a darkened understanding, (Ephes. " iv. 18.); and may be but very imperfectly per- " ceived, even by those whose understanding is " enlightened, (Ephes. i. 18.)

" With regard to controversy in general, I " think it is an unprofitable, or rather a hurtful " kind of reading. It is, indeed, right to search " for the truth. But if one has found it, and is " at all established in the faith, he has no more " to gain by disputation. He may dispute, and " discuss, till he has discussed away all the life " and energy of the truth. For my own part, " I have always found the time worse than " thrown away, which I have spent in the chill- " ing regions of controversy; and I would ra- " ther hear " five words" that would warm my " love to the Saviour, or to my brother, than " " ten thousand words" from the most subtile " or eloquent disputant."

About the commencement of the same year, Mr Stewart had been visited with much personal and family distress, to which he alludes in the following letter to his friend in England:

" *May* 14*th* 1816.

" My very dear Brother,

" If drawing nearer to the eternal world, ne- " cessarily inferred our withdrawing to a greater

" distance from all sublunary objects, I should
" need no other apology for my long silence.
" Certainly my approaches to the confines of
" my present state of existence are strongly
" marked, in some of the mental faculties, in
" my bodily constitution, and in my looks.
" What impressive discipline did my family and
" myself experience six or seven months ago!
" and how much of the same kind may have
" been dealt out to you, my brother, in the
" same period? We were indeed brought very
" low with severe, lingering fever; but the
" Lord who smote us, spared and restored us,
" so that we are all escaped alive to praise his
" forbearance and his tender love. His mercy
" faileth never. But, alas! I have not rendered
" again according to the benefit done unto me.
" There never was a heart more insensible than
" mine to the things of God, the concerns of my
" people, of my family, and of my own soul.
" Every duty is marred, and at every step I
" stumble. But while I find that this is un-
" doubtedly so, I see more clearly the great need
" and suitableness of many promises which I
" have often held forth to others, but had never
" heartily embraced for myself. O! to have
" my loins girt about, and my lamp burning.
" But, alas! I perceive neither oil nor flame.

" One word alone keeps me from sinking, "Christ " is all." Forgive all this egotism."

Not long after, to a young lady of quality in the neighbourhood, who, on hearing him preach on the subject of death, had expressed a wish to have some book recommended that might furnish her with further instruction on the momentous point, Mr Stewart wrote:

Dingwall, 11*th Dec.* 1817.

" My dear Madam,

" The subject on which you express yourself " with such affecting seriousness and feeling, is " certainly one which ought never to be far " from the thoughts of a mortal, yet immortal " being. And yet how often do we find it " otherwise: it is lamentable to hear young per- " sons, when reminded of death and eternity, re- " ply, that it is too soon to think of these things, " as if one could " make an agreement with " death, and a covenant with the grave." I " should have thought that people must have " taken pains, and exercised their ingenuity in " contriving to keep the thought of death at a " distance, if I did not know too well in my " own case, that heedlessness and unconcern a- " bout futurity are quite natural, and that it re- " quires the operation of a divine power to cor-

" rect them. A melancholy proof this, of blind-
" ness and folly! We are already on our jour-
" ney, and we know we cannot stop; we may
" turn our eyes aside, but we cannot arrest the
" progress of time; we are sure death is before
" us, is approaching, and inevitable; yet how
" seldom, how transiently, how carelessly do we
" think of the consequences? I dare say, my
" dear young lady, you have observed this to be
" pretty much the case with yourself, at least,
" during a part of your life. Now, indeed, I
" trust it may be otherwise. This " last ene-
" my" has made such unsparing inroads into
" your family, as must have left deep, and pain-
" ful, and lasting impressions. I have felt my-
" self participate largely in your family sorrows.
" But natural feelings, I well know, will not
" suffice to awaken the conscience, or to change
" the heart. It is divine influence alone, that
" will make a person, even in the view of death,
" inquire with holy earnestness, " What shall I
" do to be saved?" And it is the same Divine
" Spirit that can make the inquirer cordially to
" receive the only right answer, " Believe in the
" Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

" Among the many pleasing and instructive
" anecdotes which are related of our amiable
" departed Princess, I was particularly struck
" with her earnest request to a pious clergy-

" man, to inform her what would make a " death-bed easy? This was, it seems, a ques- " tion which she put to several ministers. Such " an anxious desire, entertained and expressed " repeatedly, by a person in health, and in the " bloom of youth, shews a mind accustomed " to the contemplation of the important, eter- " nal realities of the invisible world. It were " easy to give a short comprehensive answer " to this most interesting query, but it might " require a long exposition to bring the mean- " ing fully forth, in a practical application. " To the question, What can make a death-bed " easy? one might answer, Trust in Christ, " the only Saviour of sinners; or, A believing " view of the mercy of God in the gospel; or, " A firm hold and dependence on the cove- " nant of grace,—answers of nearly the same " import. They imply, however, a previous " knowledge of the truth revealed in scripture, " conviction of guilt, a total renunciation of " dependence on ourselves, and a full appro- " bation and acceptance of the salvation of- " fered freely in the gospel. It might be an- " swered farther, that to die safely, one must " have an interest in Christ, Phil. iii. 9.; to " die peacefully, one must have a persuasion of " one's interest in Christ, 2 Tim. i. 12.; to " die triumphantly, a man must find himself

" victorious over the enemies of his soul,
" 2 Tim. iv. 6—8.; to die free of fear, or con-
" cern, it is enough that one be ignorant and
" thoughtless.

" How happy should I be, in furnishing any
" help to you and your dear esteemed sisters,
" to guide your meditations on this most im-
" portant subject. I dare say you are not un-
" acquainted with the writings of Mrs Han-
" nah More, a lady to whose religious and
" charitable labours her country is under incal-
" culable obligation. In case you may not
" have her works at hand, I beg leave to send
" a volume of hers, containing several admirable
" essays. Those I would particularly recom-
" mend, are the Chapters on Prayer, on In-
" sensibility to Eternal Things, and on Happy
" Deaths.

" I hope you will have the goodness to for-
" give me for delaying to answer your kind
" and interesting note, and to take in good
" part the freedom I have used in this hasty
" attempt at an answer. While you search the
" scriptures with attention and prayer, you will
" derive from them more satisfactory, and im-
" pressive, and efficacious instruction, than I
" or any man living can give."

In this (1817) and the subsequent year, Mr

Stewart was prosecuting his parochial labours with all the assiduity and zeal compatible with the incumbrance of a bodily frame shaken by disease, and greatly debilitated. Amid his own trials, he ever was mindful of the afflictions which others endured, as the following letters, the one written to his correspondent in Shropshire, the other to a bereaved husband, will shew.

To the Rev. Mr D.

" *Jan.* 3. 1817.

" My very dear Brother,

" It was indeed singularly kind in you to " excuse my long silence, and to send me a " second letter, when I had not acknowledged " your former. Your two favours of July and " November last, are both before me, both so " full of heavenly consolation and brotherly " kindness, that I am oppressed with such un- " deserved favour, and experience something " of the same feelings with him who said, " " Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." " *My* letters, on the contrary, are attenuated " into mere bulletins, short intimations to my " kind friends and brethren, that I still need " their prayers in the wilderness. It excites " my daily wonder and gratitude, that so many

" of the Lord's dear people still think of me,
" and take an interest in my welfare. It en-
" courages me to hope, that poor and needy as
" I am, yet the Lord thinketh on me, Psalm
" xl. 17. So you, my dear friend, have been
" again disciplined in the school of sickness
" and suffering. Well I knew that He who ap-
" pointed you the trial, would take care that it
" should not be unprofitable to your soul. He
" loves his children too well to afflict them
" willingly, or chasten them for his own plea-
" sure; and he is too wise to throw away his
" chastisement, or waste it unprofitably. You
" may not yet perceive what benefit has result-
" ed from it: it is very natural for you to wish
" earnestly to know it, in order to be satisfied
" that the trial has not been wholly misimprov-
" ed and lost. But this, like many other of the
" Lord's doings, you may not know now, but
" you shall know it hereafter. We must not
" say like Thomas, " except I shall see, and feel,
" I will not believe." I, your friend, should
" like also to see and understand how much my
" dear brother D——— has been refined, like
" gold tried in the fire. But I must be con-
" tented to know, in general, what I cannot
" doubt, that every branch in Christ that bear-
" eth fruit, when it is purged and pruned, it is
" that it may bring forth more fruit. And so

" it will. I remember an old, pious, very re-
" cluse minister, whom I used to meet with
" once a-year. He scarcely ever looked at a
" newspaper. When others were talking about
" the French revolution, he shewed no concern
" or curiosity about it. He said he knew from
" the Bible how it would all end, better than
" the most sagacious politician,—that the Lord
" reigns,—that the earth will be filled with his
" glory,—that the gospel will be preached to all
" nations,—and that all subordinate events are
" working out these great ends. This was
" enough for him, and he gave himself no con-
" cern about the news or events of the day, only
" saying, It shall be well with the righteous."

" I do not know that ever I mentioned to
" you, that with regard to our time of joining
" in prayer, I have been long obliged to discon-
" tinue it on Fridays, as I was always exposed
" to interruption that day, from being obliged
" to go out, or to receive calls within. But I
" endeavour to transfer it to Saturday, when I
" am always at home and alone. But often in
" a day does my wretched heart constrain me to
" cry with good Mr Newton,

" I prize the privilege of prayer,
But, O! what backwardness to pray!"

" And now, on this point of intercessory prayer,

" if I may be allowed to mention what I would " intreat you to ask for my poor barren soul,—it " is this,—more spiritual sensibility, that I may " be more affected with the glories of redeeming " love, with the horrid evil of sin, and with the " dismal state of perishing sinners;—that I may " be more watchful, and attentive, and con- " scientious, in performing daily ordinary duties, " and in guarding against ordinary offences;—in " a word, to be more alive to God, more awake " to righteousness. To you, my beloved brother, " I think I can unbosom my gross feelings, be- " cause I think you can and will believe me. " To most of my Christian acquaintances I dare " not confess my secret sins, for I feel it to be " nothing else than an exhibition of myself, and " a seeking of praise for my apparent humility. " If I speak a word, however sincerely, con- " demning myself, I find I am only gratifying " and feeding my pride. It is possible you may " understand something of this."

To the Honourable Mr ———.

" *October 23d*, 1818.

" My dear Sir,

" I was early informed by our esteemed friend " Mr H———, of the heavy affliction with " which it has pleased your God to visit you;

" an affliction with which myself and my family
" were affected in no ordinary degree.

" Shall we receive good at the hand of God,
" and shall we not receive evil? You, my dear
" Sir, did receive great good. The Lord gave
" you his own Son, and he gave you his own
" Spirit; and he gave you for a partner one of
" his own dear children, created anew after his
" own likeness. In these gifts were included a
" thousand lesser ones. The language of your
" grateful heart then was, " Bless the Lord, O
" my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

" I have an affecting remembrance at this mo-
" ment, of the delight with which I witnessed
" your happiness for one short hour. I figured
" to myself what sweet fellowship you must
" have enjoyed in your excursion, in con-
" templating together the works of God, and
" strewing your tracts, these little winged mes-
" sengers, among your poor, ignorant fellow-
" creatures. Such was some of the " good"
" which you had received. But, oh! how short
" its duration! How quickly did the " evil"
" follow! *Evil*, in respect of the pain it in-
" flicted, and the good it took away; but not
" evil in the estimation of Him who seeth the
" end from the beginning, and who maketh *all*
" things work together for *good* to them that
" love him.

" He had destined you for some eminent sta-
" tion in his employment, and therefore he put
" you early to school, and advanced you rapidly
" to one of the highest forms, and taught you
" one of the hardest lessons of faith and sub-
" mission. Still his injunction, example, and
" promise, speak in most encouraging language.
" " Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me,
" for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you
" shall find rest to your souls."

" But why dwell only on the heavy loss sus-
" tained, the delightful enjoyment interrupted?
" Let us contemplate the bliss of which she is
" now in actual possession. When, but a few
" months ago, you were united on earth, you
" did not expect to have the honour so soon of
" handing your beloved partner up to Heaven,
" nor did she expect to arrive so soon at her
" kingdom and her crown. But even then, the
" Lord's counsel was, " I know the thoughts that
" I think towards you, thoughts of peace, and
" not of evil, to give you an expected end."
" She is taken away from the evil to come, and
" if you must yet meet evil in the wilderness,
" you will be carried safely through. She who
" would have helped you is removed, yet " Fear
" not, saith the Lord, I am with you; lo, I am
" with you alway."

" You had a near view of death, but his sting

" was not to be seen. Nor shall the grave al-
" ways boast of his victory. You know that
" the day is fast approaching, when this cor-
" ruptible must put on incorruption, and this
" mortal must put on immortality, and death
" shall be swallowed up in victory.

" There was a time when I stood in the same
" predicament as you do now. While life re-
" mained, I would have given the world to have
" my " gourd spared;" but when she was gone,
" and I thought of her being made perfect in
" glory, I durst not so much as wish her back
" again.

" One special comfort (I trust you have
" many) yet remains to you, a sweet living
" memorial, which (to use Lord Strafford's
" words) a saint in heaven has left you.
" What would our disconsolate Leopold, what
" would our whole nation, not give for the
" like memorial? A child of many prayers,
" like yours, is the peculiar care of the " good
" Shepherd;" and one has much encourage-
" ment in devoting him early, and daily, to
" the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of
" Jacob. I earnestly pray, that the unfeigned
" faith that dwelt in his grandmother (Lois),
" and in his mother (Eunice), may be in him
" also.

" Forgive, my dear Sir, this incoherent at-

" tempt to impart something of my sentiments " on an occasion so affecting to myself, as well " as to friends whom I sincerely love. He " who came to comfort those that mourn, will " surely not leave you comfortless, but will " send you more abundantly of his own Spirit, " the real Comforter.

" I feel a warm attachment to your pious " brother, Mr ———. I know him by charac- " ter, and by his published Discourses. These " were sent me by the kind attention of Mr " H———, and have furnished me a very sa- " voury repast. Long may his gracious Mas- " ter be pleased to employ and countenance his " faithful labours!"

In 1819, Mr Stewart met with a trying bereavement in the death of his unmarried sister, who had been exceedingly helpful to him at Moulin, and with whom, on her removal to Glasgow, he had maintained a very close correspondence by letters. She was a woman of extraordinary resolution, piety, and zeal, and how much he felt her loss, appeared from what he wrote to Mr D——— on the occasion.

October 23d, 1819.

" My very dear Brother,

" Instead of replying particularly to your

" last welcome and refreshing letter, I proceed
" to anounce an event which I did not look for
" so soon, a bereavement for which I was but
" ill prepared. My dear sister, Margaret, was
" called away from this life to a better, on the
" 11th instant, in her sister's house in Stirling.
" She had come thither on a visit about three
" weeks before. Her health had been declin-
" ing during the summer. None of us, how-
" ever, apprehended the end of her life so near.
" Soon after her coming to her sister's, she was
" confined to bed; she believed herself dying;
" frequently expressed her entire dependence
" on the righteousness and mediation of her
" divine Saviour, but soon fell into a lethargic
" state. The physician declared her case to be
" a rapid decay of nature, and that medicine
" could be of no service to her. In this state
" she continued, slumbering and insensible,
" for four or five days, and then expired, al-
" most imperceptibly. " Blessed are the dead
" that die in the Lord." How different was
" her life from its close! She long enjoyed
" sound health, and was full of activity and
" energy in her Lord's service. In the last
" stage, her mind, as well as body, became tor-
" pid and inactive. But the Lord knew her
" frame, and remembered she was but dust.
" I now recollect, with satisfaction, the happy

" interview I had with her, during a few days
" in June last. I certainly did not reckon on
" its being our last interview. But it is not
" the last! No! we shall meet again, ere long,
" in our Father's house; and you, my brother,
" shall meet with us, and then we shall see
" each other face to face; and we shall, with
" open face, behold the glory of Him that sit-
" teth on the throne, and of the Lamb that was
" slain, but liveth and reigneth for evermore!
" *O preclarum diem!*

" While we are yet in the wilderness, the
" scene often shifts. After much deliberation,
" and asking counsel from on high, I have
" come to the determination, if the Lord will,
" of passing a few months in Edinburgh, for the
" benefit of my health. My medical friends
" advise it,—my clerical brethren urge it, and
" kindly undertake to supply my pulpit in my
" absence. The church is under repair, which
" makes it necessary for me now to preach in
" the field. I could not do this in winter,
" though I were at home."

In this letter, Mr Stewart communicates the resolution which he had taken to repair to Edinburgh, with his family, for the winter. In the spring of this year, the symptoms of his disorder had become so alarming, that in order to procure

consultation of physicians on his case, he was induced to venture on a journey to Edinburgh, which, to one who had been unable, for a considerable space, to move beyond the precincts of his own parish, was an arduous undertaking. His Lord, however, was with him by the way; and, after visiting friends at Perth, Stirling, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, he returned home, rather improved in health. The medical opinion, however, was not flattering; nor had any permanent relief been obtained by means of Dr Gregory, and his zealous advisers among the faculty, some of whom added Christian character to high professional eminence, and were assiduous in their attentions to him for his Master's sake; while the love expressed to him by many private individuals and families, made a deep impression on his grateful heart. Indeed, in the beautiful letters which he wrote Mrs Stewart during his absence, he seems quite overpowered with thankfulness to God and his people, for the providential kindnesses heaped upon him.

His return home was not attended with any encouraging circumstances; for whether he dwelt on the effects of his ministry in Dingwall, or reflected on his own declining health, there was much ground of discouragement. As to his labours at Dingwall, though not attended with those demonstrations of divine power which ren-

dered his ministration of the gospel at Moulin so signally effectual, there is reason to believe they were not without much benefit to numbers. Indeed, the faithful exhibition of divine truth, enforced by the consistent tenor of a holy life, could hardly fail to operate beneficially on general character, though the result might be short of conversion. And that a visible reformation of open immoralities took place during his ministry, was confessed even by the enemies of religion. Besides the good that directly sprung from his labours in the pulpit, he exerted himself with much zeal and perseverance to promote the religious education of the young,—having with much pains, and after many difficulties, succeeded in establishing, on a permanent foundation, a school in which children should be taught in the vernacular language.

In addition to the efforts which he made in his own immediate vicinity, he took an active part in the formation of a society in Inverness, for promoting the education of the poorer class of Highlanders on a more extensive scale;—while of every Christian institution, which had for its object the circulation of the scriptures, or the extension of missionary labour among the heathen, he was the constant advocate, and zealous agent; and the sums transmitted from his little district, shewed with what influence

others were carried along with him in the cause of Christ.

But though many things testified his coming to Dingwall had not been in vain, with the general aspect of that field of labour he was little satisfied. Some time before his going to Edinburgh, he writes to Mrs Calder:—"I have had "no small share of trial, and no little grief, from "numbers of giddy young persons being en-"ticed by that public pest the play-house, not-"withstanding the magistrates and others did "what they could to discountenance them."—Such griefs were the more sensibly felt, because he could no more go forth to seek after the wandering, or to lead the obedient in the paths of active duty.

While Mr Stewart lamented the little success of his ministry in Dingwall, he saw his sphere of action becoming every day more contracted, through the pressure of his internal malady,—the nature of which was such, that for the preservation of his life, prompt medical assistance had become at times necessary, and such assistance could not be obtained in so remote a place. This made his family and friends exceedingly desirous to have him try the effects of a winter's residence in Edinburgh, where the best medical skill was always accessible; and the wish of his friends was strengthened by the advice of his

physicians, who uniformly recommended the expedient proposed.

Mr Stewart at length listened to the proposal; and his church being under repair, which would have prevented his preaching during the winter months though he had been at home, and various unexpected providences concurring to promote the design, and provide for its exigencies, he left Dingwall, with his entire family, in October 1819,—little supposing he should see it no more. His voyage to Leith was attended with no difficulties; and his friends having prepared for his family suitable accommodations, he pitched his wilderness tent, for a season, on new and interesting ground.

In many respects, he found the change beneficial; for, besides the facilities of education which his numerous family enjoyed in every department of requisite knowledge, under his own superintendence, he himself soon perceived a considerable improvement in health,—to which both his relief from ministerial labours, and his ready access to medical aid, greatly contributed.

Dr Stewart *, however, was not like those who, for some family reasons, or the love of so-

* The degree of Doctor in Divinity had been, with great propriety, conferred on Mr Stewart by Marischal College, Aberdeen.

ciety, betake themselves to town, and for a season greatly divest themselves of the ministerial character. Wherever he went, the servant of Christ was manifested; and with what diversity of engagements he was exercised in Edinburgh, will appear from the following letter to Mr D——:

January 20th, 1820.

" I have too much experience of your candour to suppose, that you can be provoked to entertain the painful suspicion of my having become cold in my attachment to my dear brother D——, notwithstanding the rare recurrence of my poor communications. If my avocations in the country were many, here they are multiplied seven-fold. There is a numerous Christian society. Christian friends are extremely kind to myself and my family. This creates many claims on my gratitude and acknowledgments. My general health is considerably improved since I came to Edinburgh, so that I am able to move about; and as I have no fixed and stated duty on hand, I am considered as a kind of idler, who may answer any call that the public service of *societies*, or the wishes of individual friends, may happen to suggest. This almost constant intercourse, and extending acquaintance,

" with pious characters, is very pleasing for the
" time; but I feel already, what I apprehended
" from the first, that it rather distracts the mind,
" draws it too much from home, and gives it a
" turn for dissipation. I feel uneasy under the
" continuance of this mode of life; and I found
" it quite gratifying, yesterday, when the very
" stormy weather kept myself within, and all
" the world out, for almost the whole of the
" day. But, alas! my hard, insensible heart,
" profits by nothing. I have the privilege of
" hearing some excellent preachers, and I feel
" impressed by their prayers and their sermons;
" but how far I am really improved and edified,
" is a question that it humbles me much to
" answer."

Thus actively was Mr Stewart employed, to the full extent of his power, and perhaps beyond what a prudential regard to health would have dictated. But it was not easy to refuse himself to those who repaired to his hospitable house, to partake of the spiritual refreshment which his conversation, expositions of the word, and devotional exercises, freely provided. At that time he was without the charge of any particular congregation in the city, otherwise public work must necessarily have abridged the extent and frequency of those private exercises; and per-

haps they may sometimes be over-valued, and carried to an unprofitable excess. But though a gossiping spirit may creep into religious society, and persons without serious impressions, or solid piety, may be kept a-going in the way of profession by those means, and though unseasonable demands may be made on a minister's time and strength for out-of-season services; it is nevertheless true, that to despise them altogether argues little delight in Christian fellowship, and little love for tending the flock of Christ; for if we find any athirst for salvation, we ought not to defer rolling away the stone from the well's mouth, though the hour for the public watering of them be not yet come. And we cannot but regard it as a great improvement in the modes of social intercourse among the religious, that there is now a greater freedom of communication, and openness of fellowship, than had been practised in some years, or perhaps ages, that are past.

Dr Stewart had been only a few months in Edinburgh, when the minister of the first charge in the parish in which he resided, was taken away by one of those sudden deaths which are so much calculated to alarm the thoughtless world. Previous to this event, Dr Stewart's friends had been anxiously revolving expedients for retaining him in town, from a conviction

that he could be there more useful than in Dingwall; and that, besides, the state of his health absolutely required him, if it could be accomplished, to devolve his country parish on the charge of an ordained assistant, and reside permanently in Edinburgh. Various plans were in agitation, when Providence, as in a time of similar suspense at Moulin, interposed to solve perplexities, and make the way plain. And immediately on the above-mentioned decease, the eyes of his Christian friends were turned to the vacant charge, as most suitable for Dr Stewart, and among others, the gentleman referred to (at page 314.) employed a most ardent and unremitted zeal to bring it about. At first, however, there was little hope of success, for the candidates were numerous, and some of them had as much interest at command, as is usually required to procure such an appointment from the servants of the crown, with whom the nomination lay. But a distinguished nobleman, to whose lady Mrs Stewart was nearly related, having waited on the king in person, readily obtained for Dr Stewart the royal patronage, to the surprise and disappointment of not a few; but to himself and family, as well as to many others, it appeared in the light of a most admirable and propitious act of His providence,

whose counsels are immutable, and to them that fear him, immutably gracious!

"Could I, with a wish," he wrote to Mr D———, "transport you to the house where "I now dwell, and to the little study where I "now sit, and place you in an elbow-chair beside "me, and grasp your brotherly hand, I would "tell "strange things," and would a "tale un- "fold," at which I cannot cease to wonder, and "which I can scarcely yet believe to be true! "By a train of most unexpected occurrences, "marking the hand of God, and his determin- "ed purpose, overruling events, and bearing "down opposition, here am I settled minister "of what is called the First Charge of Canon- "gate Parish, (where seldom has *wild man* been "placed before), and in the face of much op- "position and influence, which was mustered "against such an ominous and alarming event. "It is impossible for me now to detail the cir- "cumstances which distinguish this eventful "chapter of my story; but I do not think it is "at all impossible, that I should have the hap- "piness, one day, of relating these, and many "other things, *viva voce*, to my dear brother "D———, in this very place. It is quite a "common thing for one and another of our "beloved English brethren, to make an ex- "cursion to the north, as far as this city, for

" the sake of health, and of Christian fellow-
" ship; and I joyfully indulge the hope, that,
" on some fine summer day, you may take
" a trip to visit your friends and brethren
" here, who will rejoice to see your face. We
" have some really sanctified pulpits too, and
" serious congregations, in your connection,
" where you will be gladly received and wel-
" comed.

" Here I enjoy many things which are high-
" ly gratifying, and, I trust, profitable. Dur-
" ing last winter and spring, which I found it
" necessary to spend in Edinburgh, to be near
" my medical friends, my health improved very
" considerably, and now continues uniformly
" good, though I am far from being robust. I
" am conjoined with an excellent colleague, Dr
" Buchanan, with whom I have long been in-
" timately acquainted. I have the benefit of
" Christian society of the most agreeable and
" congenial kind, and always extending. And
" I have an opportunity of being useful, so far
" as my few and poorly improved talents go,
" to many of my fellow-creatures, particularly
" Highlanders. I figure to myself, that one
" principal reason of my being sent to Ross-
" shire, was to put me to school, that I might
" learn to do something afterwards in Edin-
" burgh. So you see, my dear friend, that the

" Lord hath done great things for me. My " living is considerably inferior to that of Ding- " wall, but " the Lord will provide." "

Dr Stewart was admitted to his new charge in the July following, and immediately entered upon the duties of his office, with more activity than from his previously impaired constitution could have been expected. Besides occupying the pulpit in his turn, with a conscientious regularity, which he was unwilling to interrupt by the employment of occasional helps; he entered on a course of parochial visitation, which, among the crowded population of an extensive town parish, was a work of great labour and difficulty. In a book prepared for the purpose, he not only registered name and family circumstances, but also what he observed to be the character and attainments of the individuals with whom he conversed. In his progress, he found some of his parishioners so little interested in the administration of religious ordinances, as not to have learned a new minister had been appointed. Besides his own personal exertions, he was solicitous to employ the agency of Sunday-school teachers, to the greatest possible extent.

In his highly respectable colleague, as was to be anticipated, when two men " not seeking

their own, but the things of Jesus Christ," happen to be conjoined, he enjoyed the kindness of a friend, and the co-operation of a fellow-labourer, intent to promote the work of their common Lord. And upon a review of the way by which he had been led to Edinburgh, and the enlarged capacity to do good, of which he felt himself possessed,—in the midst of many public and many private blessings,—both himself was pleased at the change, and others, who contemplated the scene, began to hope for him a protracted space of usefulness and comfort. And as the Gaelic scriptures were still in a state of revision by Dr Stuart of Luss, and were passing through his hands for ultimate review, in their way to the press, it seemed peculiarly needful for the church to have his valuable talents long preserved *.

* Both these eminent scholars and yoke-fellows in biblical studies, fell nearly together, not many days having intervened between the death of Dr Stuart and his colleague in translation. It may be remarked, that Dr Stewart, speaking of the present version, stated to Dr Buchanan and to Dr Campbell his deliberate judgment, that the Highlanders already possessed one of the best translations, and that, though capable of minute improvements, it was essentially faithful, and amply sufficient for every Christian purpose. Indeed, the deliberate judgment of these two unrivalled Gaelic scholars, with respect to the general excellence of the present translation, will sufficiently appear, on comparing their

But those expectations it was not the will of his heavenly Father to realize. For, early in the winter of 1820, the paroxysms of his unremoved malady returned with a violence that shook his enfeebled frame to an alarming degree. However, he so far recovered strength, as to be able to occupy his place in the pulpit during the first four months of 1821. His almost daily sufferings were, nevertheless, so intense, that it was matter of surprise to his friends how he could continue his public appearances. But he was borne onward by a constraining desire to preach that salvation, the grace of which he felt to be so precious, and its Author so worthy to be loved. Nor did his Lord, on whom he waited in the infirmity of nature, refuse to impart pro-

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revised version with the former; for, after the most critical examination they could bestow, no alteration seems to have been made of any real importance, or affecting the sense in any considerable degree. This is the opinion of very competent judges: and the church not affording, in every age, qualifications for the work equal to theirs, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge may perhaps see it expedient to discontinue the projected revision of the whole, and may prefer publishing, in quarto, the Gaelic Scriptures, including what has been done by these eminent men, with no other emendations than adjusting the orthography to a uniformity with the mode which they had adopted in the part of the work that is already executed.

portionally greater supplies of his everlasting strength. And with what earnestness, solemnity, and affection, he addressed his auditors, beseeching, intreating, praying them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God; they themseves were witnesses, and ought not soon to forget. While, in bringing out from the stores of his own various experience, the conflicts and the consolations of the life of faith, those hearers who had previously known the grace of the Saviour, enjoyed a rich repast, and confessed there was a savour of divine things diffused over his discourses, that was most refreshing to their souls, and mightily animated them in their way to heaven.

Dr Stewart was upheld by his Lord in the exercise of his public ministry, until the month of May 1821, on the first Sabbath of which he assisted in dispensing the Lord's supper to the congregation, and preached the evening sermon at the close. On that day his appearance was calculated to excite a tender, though painful interest, there being an air of languor and debility deeply impressed on his every feature and movement. In the evening sermon, however, at which the writer of this account was present, there was a degree of freedom, animation, and force of mind displayed, which seemed to gladden the countenances of his auditory with the hope of many such days; while there was, in the whole

exercise of the evening, a serious and yet lively strain, with which, it might be thought, few could remain unaffected or unimpressed *.

But this was his last exertion of a public kind. Next Sabbath he accepted assistance; and his disease being evidently ripening to an extremity, he spake of his decease as at no great probable distance. Indeed, the last letter he addressed to Mr D———, shews how near to eternity he thought himself in prospect.

" *March* 23*d*, 1821.

" My very dear Friend,

" With me disease is making progress. My " sand is running apace, and the time of my

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* This sermon, which was preached from Mal. iv. 2. " Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteous- " ness arise with healing in his wings," excited uncommon interest at the time of delivery,—an interest which did not decrease, on its being found to be the *last*. Indeed, many applications were afterwards made to obtain copies of the MS. with which it was impossible to comply, the discourse having been delivered from a few skeleton notes, filled up as utterance and enlargement were given him for the occasion. It appeared, afterwards, that several individuals had been much impressed and profited,—and thus the Lord was pleased to put honour on the closing act of the ministry of a servant, whose labours he had before often countenanced and blessed.

" departure is sensibly drawing nigher. I suffer " much pain, but the Lord has not forsaken " me. Almost the only duty that I can per- " form is preaching,—that privilege is still con- " tinued with me.

" Much of the night is spent awake. I will " endeavour to think on you and yours. Do " you remember me, and pray that the Lord " may be with me in passing Jordan. O eter- " nity, what a weighty idea! Farewell, my " dear brother, perhaps it may be the last, but " we shall meet hereafter. Have we not eter- " nity to spend together? Glory be to God, " and to the Lamb that was slain, but liveth " and reigneth,—and we shall reign with him!"

Thus realizing his nearness to an invisible world, having, like Israel of old, waited for the salvation of the Lord, and knowing, like Simeon, a manifested Saviour, whom he gladly embraced by faith, he began, like the one, to bless his children previous to his decease, and, like the other, to desire to be let depart. Two of his sons having laid him down one evening to rest, " My dear boys," said he, " take your " father's blessing, it may be the last time I " will give it you.—May the God of your fa- " thers bless you, and keep you, and make his " countenance to shine upon you, and give you " peace!"

On another occasion, to one of them, supporting him under a fit of pain, he said, "You "will not have it to do long."—"All shall be "well with you, my dear father," said the affectionate youth. "O yes," cried he immediately, "I have evidences which I cannot deny, "that the Lord has been gracious to me. But "I now live by faith, I have no sensible enjoy-"ments."

On these occasions of intense pain, the grace of patience had its work so perfect, that it was a common remark of his, "David had to sing "of mercy and judgment together, but it is all "mercy with me."

But, amid these conflicts, the time of victory drew on, and the last enemy fell before him, sooner indeed than his watchful family had apprehended. For, in the afternoon of Sunday, May 27. without any previous alteration sufficient to excite apprehension, he suddenly fell into a sort of deliquium, in which he continued for about the space of an hour, without speech or apparent consciousness of pain, and then gently quitted the earthly tabernacle, to obtain a mansion in his Father's house, there, doubtless, to be ever present with the Lord!

Thus entered into rest, in his 57th year, a man whom all esteemed, many loved, and not a few regarded in the light of a father in Christ. Of

his general character, or method of life, nothing need be added to what is set down in the preceding memoir, in which he is minutely exhibited in his public duties, and domestic manners. A few lines of the portraiture, however, have either been omitted, or faintly marked; and we have only these to retouch, in order to complete our design.

The prominent feature in his character was simplicity,—a simplicity not arising from the action of a mind that can bring but a single faculty into exercise at once; but a simplicity of combination, in which many faculties co-operate to produce unity of purpose, and evenness of tenor in the progress of life. There was no contexture of plot, artifice, or disguise in his procedure. On his professions one might always safely rely; and if he was seen moving towards an object, it could always be predicted of him with certainty, that the way of rectitude would be his path, and that, if he could not reach it in that straight, open, and unsuspected way, he would rather stop short, than move aside to courses indirect and questionable. His was the simplicity of a man who, having eternity in his eye, could say, "This one thing I do,—I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

This simplicity characterized his intercourse with friends, and gave an unspeakable charm to

his communications with those whom he admitted into his familiarity; for as he never professed esteem where he did not feel it, nor distinguished with the name of friend, any whom he counted not worthy of unreserved confidence; so, towards the selected objects of his regard, he used a freedom and a frankness of disclosure, with respect to his own feelings, sentiments, and condition, which none will employ, but a man who, knowing the conscious rectitude of his own thoughts and purposes, is not afraid nor ashamed to submit them to the review of other minds. For he who has no higher object of pursuit, than to attain proper habits of thought and action, if any thing is deficient or erroneous, will deem the correction of it a benefit of too great magnitude to be lost, without embracing every prudent expedient for securing it.

In submitting himself to the judgment of others, he was truly disinterested, for he neither wished to palliate his infirmities, nor to embellish his virtues. He was a man of truth, and loved truth in every form. And on this principle, he would tell what he had acquired, and what he could do, with the same candour and freedom from selfish considerations, as in pointing out what he knew not, and could not perform. He seemed to have obtained that rare victory over self, that he would neither detract from its real character, in the way of deprecia-

tion below the truth, nor give it an undue estimation, by assigning to it attributes it did not possess.

His disinterestedness in the management of secular affairs was unimpeachable. He had a large family depending on an income comparatively not large; yet the calls of charity, both for common and religious purposes, were liberally answered, and the language of his habitual conduct in his transactions with men, was, "I seek not *yours*, but *you*."

On his way home, in a visit he paid to Edinburgh in 1819, having at the house of a friend met with one of his earliest Moulin converts, who was in reduced circumstances, on parting with her, remembering he had just got a balance of three pounds, on settling with his bookseller, he gave one of them to this person, for the Lord's sake.

"How happy am I," said he, in a letter to Mrs Stewart mentioning what he had done, "in "not having a worldly, covetous wife, to whom "I would be afraid to tell what I gave away, "and need to make twenty apologies!"

As he exercised himself in rectitude towards man, before his God, he was without guile, opening his heart to every gracious influence, and aiming to receive all God's truth, and to be altogether conformed to his will. From the yoke of no precept did he desire to withdraw

his neck, nor refuse to any doctrine, plainly revealed, the ready subjection of his understanding. And no higher character of his faith and piety can be given, than that which one who knew him long and most intimately gave, in saying, "That he believed all the Bible." It was this unsuspecting simplicity, and unreserved extent of faith, that gave to his religious life the simplicity of tenor, and the consistency of parts, which beautified his character as a whole. In him, belief and obedience went hand in hand, or rather were dependent on each other, as cause and effect; the one furnishing motives, the other shewing that the grace of faith was not received in vain.

Of his personal religion, it were idle repetition to say more than the preceding memoir discloses. His own attainments shrink back from the enlightened judgment that brought them under impartial review, and he was ready to count the least of the Lord's people superior to himself, and to act towards them accordingly. His self-abasement was profound, and would have rendered life not happy, had not the consolations of Christ opened up to his faith the fruition of "all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places." But this reconciled the apparent contraries,—"O wretched man that I am!" "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ."—

" My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

In his religious exercises, the character of his own soul was apparent. There ran through them a strain of undissembled humiliation in confessing prevailing unworthiness, and a thankful expression of the value, sufficiency, and preciousness of God's unspeakable gift, accompanied with such a sincerity of request, and such a various exercise of spiritual desire, that to join with him in acts of social or public worship, was highly interesting and profitable. It was easy to see in him, a man seeking access to God in earnest, and transacting the all-important matters of soul-concern, seriously, as a creature pleading for life and grace in the presence of the Creator; sober in expression, full in confessing sin, and, with a holy boldness, putting the Father of mercy in remembrance of the finished work of the sinner's Surety, and the promise of acceptance given us in Christ Jesus. He himself always lamented the coldness of his affections; but no friend ever found him cold. And if, in his devotion, there was no seraphic ardour, there was a desire to attain it, and humility, because his affections did not equal the height of his desire; and such a frame is doubtless the acceptable production of much grace. In those exercises, there was a spirit

that warmed others,—and what communicated fervency, could not itself be cold.

As a minister of the gospel, few in our church, in latter days at least, have occupied higher ground, whether his qualifications be considered, or his success. His qualifications were eminent. With human nature, and the modifications of human character, he was well acquainted. His knowledge of the scriptures in the original tongues, was critically accurate and extensive. He had clear perceptions of divine truth, and a weighty sense of its vast importance. The truths of revealed religion he cordially embraced himself, and he could exhibit them in minute detail, or with systematic combination. His own ideas were clear and methodical; and he had the talent of placing his thoughts in the most natural arrangement, and of elucidating, by apt and familiar illustration, the doctrines which he proposed. What study could furnish, and the ingenuity of a highly cultivated mind, was at his command. But this alone had been but poor furniture for a minister of the gospel. It was the experience of a work of grace on his own soul, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit shed on him abundantly, through Jesus Christ his Lord, that made him the able minister of the new covenant, which he evidently shewed himself to be. He had obtained much of that

anointing which imparts an unction of refreshment to truth in the understanding, and gives a savour of divine things to spoken truths, which the most brilliant streams of eloquence cannot otherwise supply.

Viewed in the pulpit, there was nothing strongly marked in his deportment. Plain, serious, and sedate,—much impressed with his subject,—in earnest to have it understood,—deeply interested to have his hearers brought to know, feel, and enjoy the salvation of Christ,—he evidently appeared. But as a rational being dealing with rational beings, he spoke the language of reason, and bore the countenance of soberness and truth. His aspect at times, indeed, pourtrayed every feeling of his soul, beaming with an expression of infelt gladness, or solemnized into the most affecting features of sympathy for the impenitent who would none of his counsel or reproof. But, in general, they who went to hear him in quest of what is called fine speaking, must have been disappointed; for in his manner there was nothing of display, no impassioned tones, vehement action, rapid utterance, or the fine-wrought tissue of elegant composition, or studied embellishment.

His simplicity of diction was the result of judgment early formed, and strengthened by the

experience of life. In a letter to Mr Black, already inserted, he observes of the discourses transmitted for his perusal, " They are free from " one blemish,—an elaborate and polished style. " However sensible I am to the beauties of " style, yet I cannot help considering a high " degree of polish and ornament as out of place " and improper in compositions for the pulpit." And in 1814, speaking of one of the missionary sermons preached at London, he says, " It is a " piece of fine eloquence, but it is *human* elo- " quence. I fancy sober *scripture* eloquence " goes but indifferently down with most En- " glish congregations." His judgment further appears in what he wrote to a correspondent in 1817, concerning a volume of discourses at that time much read:—

" I know not what to say. I was carried " through them like a balloon in a high wind. " The author's talent is certainly an extraordi- " nary one; but I often fear it may prove a " snare both to himself and to his hearers. His " eloquence has an intoxicating quality in it, " not very favourable to sober thinking, nor to " rational settled conviction and feeling. I " would fear its effects would be strong, but " transient, rather than solid and permanent. " Withal I have a great respect for ———.

" I trust he stands on firm ground, and that " the Master whom he serves will direct him " to such a use of his eminent gifts, as that he " will " both save himself, and them that hear " him *." "

It was not the character of Dr Stewart's mind, to excite the affections before convincing the judgment, and it was repugnant to his sense of pulpit propriety, to run fast, or soar into the regions of lofty declamation, in going over the field of his discourse. He delighted and he excelled in the exhibition of clear statement, accurate discrimination, and demonstrative certainty, in his conclusions; and with these views, a style loaded with ornament, or spread into diffuseness, was incompatible.

This unassuming simplicity of pulpit address,

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* Dr Stewart afterwards met with the eminent individual to whom he alludes, and expressed himself much delighted with his endowments. It is proper to remark, that Dr Stewart's strictures apply only to one or two of that author's earlier publications, which were confessedly defective in clearness of view, and consistency of statement, in the opinion of the most sound and serious among the admirers of his singular talents. As to his later productions, and the energy of wisdom which he has brought to bear on public opinion with such mighty effect, it were superfluous to add our feeble voice to the general acclamation.

however, was by some great admirers of exhibited talent, interpreted into an incapacity to rise high in the regions of intellectual exertion; but none acquainted with the character of his mind could have fallen into so great a mistake. And we have seen, that this very simplicity was adopted on full conviction of its superior excellence. Whether Dr Stewart was right in his judgment on this point, we need not formally decide. That the plain style has least to flatter pride, accords best with the practice of St Paul, and seems to put most honour on revealed truths, by holding them forth in plain testimony, and leaving the result to God, will appear evident to some; while others will deem all the persuasion of oratory necessary, and well employed, to arrest the attention of the careless, and captivate the ear of refinement to give audience to the gospel report. As to the point of impressing the attention, let oratory do its utmost; but in guiding enlightened souls in the way to eternity, we delight to hear the simple accents of the good Shepherd's voice. "No spectacle," says Johnson, "is nobler than a blaze;" but for doing work, who does not prefer the more limited light of a candle?

Perhaps the union of the plain and the impassioned would be the most useful style of address, and a capacity to employ both at will,

would constitute a most desireable gift; for then might deep-toned, and high-wrought feeling, "cry aloud, and spare not," while "the still small voice" spoke the counsel of peace. But the Divine Spirit *divides* his gifts, and more commonly employs a number of moderately endowed individuals, than combines manifold gifts in one; this alike cuts off occasion for glorying, and for finding fault,—seeing it is grace that regulates the proportions.

If success in the ministry be received as an evidence of a man's qualifications for it, then there are few in our times, or in our church, who can pretend to rank higher than Dr Stewart. Survey him at Moulin, in the midst of a large company converted under his ministry,—the fruits of his labours,—the blessed seals attached to his commission,—and go round about our Zion, and see in what street of the city of our God, a similar company shall be found. We may, in the search, find some ministers preaching with more force of eloquence, and adorned with accomplishments ostensibly superior to his; but inquire into the number of decided converts, and genuine Christians, formed under their ministry, and, we apprehend, few will equal the success of Dr Stewart. We do not say this to enhance the value of his labours, by a disparaging reference to those of

his brethren less successful in their work. No; while we rejoice in his success, we grieve that it is greatly singular; and we know, that though "Apollos plant, and Paul water, it is only God that giveth the increase." And we are sure, many would wish to equal him in usefulness, from whom the Lord withholds the pouring out of the Spirit in an equal degree. Faithfulness is our part, the rest belongs to a sovereign God. Various gifts and qualifications, too, are employed by him; and perhaps there is only one thing, besides the general grace of Christian character, essentially the same in those by whom the Lord works in the church, and that is, humility, or the mortification of self-seeking, with the reigning desire, that the Lord may be all in all,—that sinners may have the benefit of salvation, and He the undivided glory. Other gifts are not common, but humility is common to all whom God makes useful in his church.

It was Dr Stewart's opinion, "that we had "many able divines, sound, orthodox, and la- "borious; but not many truly humble ministers "of the meek and lowly Saviour." With respect to his own humility, though himself saw it to be exceedingly small, to others who had access to know his worth, it always appeared the master-grace in his character, and truly admirable in its influence.

If we wish to be successful in the work of Christ, we see, in Dr Stewart, what is the CHARACTER of those whom the Lord delighteth to honour. They must be first converted, obtain like precious faith, and an experimental knowledge of divine things. The Lord manifested himself to Paul, before he sent him to open the eyes of others; and so it was in the case of Dr Stewart.

The subject and manner of his preaching at Moulin, affords an example of DOCTRINE which the Lord will own and bless; and similar earnestness, faith, and zeal for converting sinners, are seldom altogether in vain. But his ministry at Dingwall admonishes us how ineffectual MEANS in themselves are. For though the same doctrines were taught, with equal diligence, by the same man, and he matured in experience, the day of small things continued to the end of his ministry in that place.

On his published works we need offer no judgment. They were not numerous, indeed; and to estimate the usefulness of his labours, by the number of treatises a minister shall publish, were to set up a fallacious standard. In fact, a man without extraordinary endowments, who gives himself in earnest to the work of the ministry, will neither be a reading man, nor a writing man, to a great extent, beyond the department of

knowledge and study that lie within the compass of official qualification. And many who have been eminently useful in the church, have often left few literary productions behind them. Indeed, he who sits down to write a book, or to read a book, not bearing on present duty, might, unless for needful relaxation, in general better employ himself in doing a good work among the living objects around him.

We do not mean, by this remark, to insinuate that literature is not necessary, and not ornamental, in the pastoral character; for it will be found, that those most useful in the church at present, are, in general, men of solid and various learning; nor has it been otherwise, we apprehend, in times past. And to disjoin literature from theology, would be to throw aside an instrument of great moral power, which, if not wielded by the friends of religion, will soon be employed for annoyance in the hands of its enemies.

But when we state the incompatibility of going far into literary pursuits and ministerial duties, in the same person, instead of representing theology and literature as at variance, our view furnishes an argument for an extensive course of study, and for the propriety of having a large provision of general knowledge laid in, previously to the assumption of the pastoral office;

for it is then too late to have habits of acquisition to form, when a man ought to be able to spend. Neither is our remark, as to the incompatibility of authorship with pastoral duty, intended to apply, except to men of ordinary endowments, who ought not, we conceive, to divert into extra-ministerial channels their limited modicum, which, from its smallness, can yield refreshment only to few. He who can pour forth streams, ought not to keep the fountain closed up; and it may be inferred from Dr Stewart's talents and grace, that, had his life been spent in places where literature was in greater estimation, and where excitements to write and publish had been more pressing, his works had been more numerous and diversified. As it was, while the Gaelic exists as a spoken tongue, future generations will owe to him important obligations. His Grammar displays a mind profoundly versed in the philosophy of language, as well as minutely acquainted with the particular tongue, the principles of which it lays down *; and no Highlander, who draws in-

* Not to mention other testimonies for the excellence of that performance, we shall only repeat what a most accomplished scholar said of it, "that though he did not understand Gaelic, he would read Dr Stewart's Grammar for

struction or comfort from his Bible, or opens his Psalm-book to praise his Lord, is unindebted to his industry and skill.

As to the sermons now presented to the public, they are not offered as specimens of eloquence, but as plain illustrations of plain, well-known scriptural truth.

As his ministry was chiefly fulfilled among a Gaelic population, where the English language was but partially understood, and not much esteemed, he had little exercise in English composition, and regarded the preparation of a sermon in that language as a very secondary object. His chief efforts were made in Gaelic, in which, it was universally allowed, he shewed himself a most accomplished speaker; and they who understood both languages, counted the English exercise tame and unequal to the other.

After his mind was enlightened and his heart enlarged, he accustomed himself to speak from very short notes, the substance of his discourse

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" the illustrations it contained of the philosophy of lan-
" guage."

In mentioning Dr Stewart's publications, we have to correct a statement in page 280, where he is said to have translated the Shorter Catechism into Gaelic. That useful work was done by an esteemed friend of Dr Stewart, the Rev. Dr Fleming, Minister of Lady Yester's Church.

being either extempore, or made up from unwritten meditations. This will account for his having left only *seven* sermons fully written out, though the number of valuable skeletons is very great.

On these discourses, no attempt need be made to direct or anticipate the judgment of the reader. He will find in them no imaginary character, high-coloured with extravagant perfections, or overcharged with exaggerations of monstrous vice. He was a preacher of truth, and feared to state an unexperienced point, or paint a character with the pencil of fancy. He drew from the life, and described the realities of nature and of grace. As he was much conversant with the exercises of minds like his own, engaged in the conflicts of spiritual warfare, he was concerned to supply motives and encouragement, direction and admonition, to their various and their varying exigencies. Much of his sermons, therefore, were strictly *experimental*, an attribute that forms the distinguishing character of them all. It will be found, too, that his addresses to the unconverted were free, frequent, and impressive, and there is often something very touching in the solemnity of his simple statement, and pointed expostulations.

He did not often methodize his sermons into

the plan of doctrinal heads, with formal inferences and improvement of the subject; yet his discourse always ran into a few divisions obviously natural and textual, for he judged an unbroken flow of discourse better adapted for a declamation, than for the communication of spiritual instruction to ordinary minds.

If his sermons are not eloquent, they possess properties which many eloquent compositions want, and which the serious reader will easily discover and feel. They are eminently scriptural in sentiment, and richly contain what constitutes "the marrow and the fat" of religious addresses, —a plentiful measure of judiciously quoted scriptures. Yet they are by no means proposed as favourable specimens of Dr Stewart's happiest style of address. For they are deficient in those apt illustrations, and beautifully striking similitudes, which he often introduced with great ingenuity, and powerful effect. These, however, came with spontaneous readiness in the act of delivery, and had no place in his written preparations; and hence, those sermons are unequal to his spoken discourses in point of liveliness and force. It will strike the reader of these discourses, that doctrines of great importance are rather taken for granted, than proved. But it should be recollected, that most of them were

addressed to a select audience, and on occasions when it was only needful to put them in remembrance of what they knew, and most surely believed. However, to those who knew the excellent author, they will be welcome for what they supply, and for what they will suggest; and the reader will see in them with what weapons the carnal mind was subdued at Moulin, and with what manner of doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, believers were taught " to serve the living God, and wait for his Son from heaven,—Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come."

SERMONS

BY THE LATE

Rev. ALEXANDER STEWART, D. D.

SERMONS, &c.

SERMON I.

ZECH. xiii. 7.—*Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.*

WELL says the Psalmist, that "the judgments of God are a great deep." The works of creation are wonderful and grand beyond what our comprehension can fathom. The works of Providence are in many things still more noble, and more inscrutable. Particularly, the plans and the operations of grace are such as no human wisdom could have devised, no human counsel durst have suggested. Even when revealed, they are still a mystery which the understanding of man can hardly apprehend. In the contemplation of such grand and astonishing objects, an enlightened apostle was constrained to exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways

past finding out!" Rom. xi. 33. When we learn, that the prophetical passage before us relates to Him who had been appointed, in the eternal counsels of the Godhead, to be the Saviour of a lost world, and the restorer of harmony among the works of God, what are we to think of such an order concerning him, as that pronounced in our text? If left to our own conjectures to discover the reason of the Lord's dealings, or even the import of his words, how often must we find ourselves at a loss what to understand, or how to judge! But, "God is his own interpreter." He can make dark things clear, and crooked things straight. He can make things hard to be understood, become plain; and things hard to be believed, appear worthy of his own unchangeable perfections.

In pursuing our meditations on the passage before us, I shall endeavour to lead your attention, *first*, to the *title* here given to the Messiah; *second*, to the *order* given concerning him; and *lastly*, to the *consequences* of executing that order.

I. Let us attend to the title here given to the Messiah, that of a Shepherd. The occupation of a shepherd was familiar to the Israelites from the days of the patriarchs, of whom we read, that "they were shepherds, that their trade was to keep cattle," through a succession of generations, even to the time of the prophet Zechariah, who, in the chapter before us, represents the false prophets as disclaiming their assumed character, and confessing, that they had only been taught to "keep cattle from their youth." Frequent allusions to the well known office of a shepherd are

made use of, both in the Old and New Testaments, to illustrate the charge which Christ takes of his people. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd," &c. Isaiah xl. 11. "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock, in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out my sheep," &c. Ezek. xxxiv. 12—15. And in a long affectionate address to the Jews, recorded in the 10th chapter of St John's Gospel, our Lord assumes the name and character of "the good Shepherd," and calls his people, his sheep; following the allusion through many interesting particulars.

Under the character of a shepherd, Jesus is represented as exercising authority as well as care, because the flock which he tends, is not only his charge, but his property. He is, in the truest sense, the proprietor and supreme ruler of his own people, whom he has ransomed with his blood, subdued by his spirit, and delivered by his power from the yoke of a tyrannical usurper. So he is exhibited as a Prince, as well as a Saviour, and as bearing the government on his shoulders.

To this high and extensive charge the Lord Jesus Christ was appointed, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, before the world began. No sooner did man apostatize from God, and fall by his iniquity,—no sooner had sin entered into the world, and death by sin,—than the Messiah was invested with his office;—he immediately entered on the administration of his terrestrial charge, and assumed the government of his mediatorial kingdom. When the fulness of the time was come, he was manifested in the flesh, —he shewed himself openly to his friends and his ene-

mies, and proved himself to be the Son of God with power. Possessed of all authority in heaven and on earth, he came to encounter the powers of death and hell; to deliver the prey from the terrible; to guide a helpless flock through a waste howling wilderness, and to bring them in safety home to his fold. Such was the undertaking which the great Shepherd of Israel was appointed to accomplish. And how well the title suited the glorious Messiah, will appear, when we consider how various and how valuable are the benefits which he had to confer on his sheep.

He had to separate them from "strange cattle," Ezek. xxxiv. 17. 22. They who are made partakers of the grace of God, and who, by the purifying influence of his Spirit, become Christ's peculiar people, are by nature nothing better than others, "being foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures," Tit. iii. 3. But Jesus knows even afar off all whom the Father hath given him, and he separates them for himself. He knew Saul of Tarsus, while he was yet a persecutor and blasphemer, for he had separated him, even from his birth, for his service in the gospel. He knew Nathaniel when he was under the fig-tree, before he had heard the name of Jesus. "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to his own image; and whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and justified, and glorified;" thus putting an immeasurable, everlasting separation, between them and "the world of the ungodly."

He had to provide pasture for them. The food which nourishes the spiritual life in the soul, is not the produce of this world. Now that the earth is under a

curse, it " brings forth thorns and thistles" in abundance, which sorely annoy the sheep of Christ, tearing the fleece, and wounding the flesh. But the tree of life grows not here, nor does the river of life water our sandy plains. The tasteless " husks" that cover the ground, may, indeed, satisfy the " swine" which fill the land; but Christ's flock must be fed with food of a different quality. Their sustenance, like the manna which fed the Israelites in the wilderness, or the rain which filled the pools in the valley of Baca, must come from above. They cannot live but on the bread of life which came down from heaven.

He had to protect them from harm. The followers of Jesus are here in an enemy's land; and many, and strong, and subtle are their foes. " Behold," said our Lord to his apostles, " I send you forth as lambs among wolves." " I know," said Paul to the elders of Ephesus, " that after my departing, grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Such is their perilous situation. They may at times find themselves in a solitary waste, and far from the tents of the shepherds; but the chief Shepherd is ever nigh them. He watches over them to protect them, that they be not destroyed, nor oppressed above measure. The vineyard of the Lord of hosts, to change the metaphor, is his constant care. " I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day," Isa. xxvii. 3.

He had, moreover, to watch that they should not go astray, and to bring them back if they should. Not only before conversion, are sinners unwilling to come to Jesus; but, what is still more lamentable, even after

having tasted that the Lord is gracious, his people are prone to wander from him, and to return to their idols and to their follies. He has to keep a strict watch over them, else they would all, like sheep, go astray, and turn every one to his own way. This charge he faithfully executes; and if he sometimes, for important purposes, allows one to stray, yet he searches and finds out the backslider, renews him to repentance, restores his soul, and leads him again in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake.

So important and various was the charge which the Keeper of Israel had to administer. And who could be so able, so wise, so tender-hearted, so qualified in every respect, to carry on and accomplish this great work of bringing sinners home to God, as was his eternal Son, the Prince of life, the Heir of all things, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person? What shall we think, then, when we hear,

II. The order given in the text, which was the second thing proposed to be considered. If left to our own short-sighted conjectures, perhaps we might be ready to say, "Surely this is the voice of the enemy;"—he who envied mankind their original purity and felicity; who said, "Let us tempt the parents to sin, and then the race shall perish; corrupt the stock, and the branches must decay." The same adversary, we might be ready to suppose, had devised a subtle, malicious plot, to defeat the glorious scheme of redemption, by cutting off its Author; and that he was now giving orders to some of his numerous agents on earth, "Smite the Shepherd,

and then the flock will fall an easy prey." Such, perhaps, might be our opinion, if left to our own conjectures. Similar to this erroneous opinion, was that of Peter, concerning the very event to which the text refers. When Jesus hinted to him the sufferings which he was soon to undergo, the warm-hearted disciple answered with his usual ardour, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee. But behold the mystery of our Lord's sufferings! Not the sentence commanding his death, but Peter's remonstrance against it, was the voice of the enemy; and it was reproved accordingly: Jesus "turned and said unto Peter, get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me," Matth. xvi. 23.

Whence, then, does this order proceed? Even from the court of heaven, and from the throne of God. It is the voice of justice, and of supreme authority. The Father, looking on the Son of his love, and in the very character with which he had so lately invested him, pronounces the rigorous sentence, "Awake, O sword, against *my Shepherd*, and against the man that is my fellow; smite the Shepherd." Is not this still very inexplicable? What has the Shepherd done, and wherein has he offended? Has he forsaken his Father's law, or neglected his Father's work? Has he been unfaithful to his trust, and left his sheep to perish in the wilderness? So far otherwise, that he was able to say with confidence to his Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost." Why, then, smite the Shepherd? We must search the scriptures, which testify of Jesus, for the explication of this

mystery. There we learn that he was smitten, because he was to do what no other shepherd ever did, to lay down his life for his sheep; because he had to "bear the sin of many, even to bear their iniquities;" because he was to be wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their iniquities; because the chastisement of their peace was upon him, and by his stripes they were to be healed. For this he was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. For this, it pleased the Lord himself to bruise him, and put him to grief. For this, he was numbered with transgressors, and poured out his soul even unto death. O the mystery of redeeming love! that "thus it behoved Christ to suffer;" and thus "it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings," Heb. ii. 10.

If such was the divine decree, that this great, this faithful Leader of the people, Messiah, was to be cut off, though not for himself,—if his life must be violently taken away as a sacrifice to the immutable justice of God, who, it might be asked, were to be the executioners of this wonderful sentence? The sword was ordered to smite, but where was the hand so daring as to wield it? Would it be any of the holy angels, who wait on the Most High to execute his just commands, and who had been already employed in taking vengeance on guilty cities? But how could any one of these pure spirits dare to lift his arm against the anointed of the Lord, or to touch his holy child Jesus, even when he stood in the room and stead of sinners?

Would it then be the inanimate elements of the world,

the winds, or the waters, or the flaming fire, which he often maketh his messengers? But even the inanimate creation recoiled from the deed, and seemed endowed with preternatural sensibility, to testify its horror and dismay. "The sun was darkened, the earth did quake, and the rocks rent."

Sin was the occasion of the Messiah's death, and *sin* must be the executioner of it. Sinners acting in their own spirit, and in their true character,—sinners of every rank and description, rulers, and priests, and common people,—both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, must combine together to execute this sentence. In their hands was the sword of justice placed, and they were left to use it according to their own murderous intent. The blow they struck was agreeable to the divine decree, but not an act of obedience to a divine command. On the contrary, it was a most daring exhibition of inveterate enmity against both the authority and the mercy of God. In the very deed which was to bring about the sinner's reconciliation, sin must appear what it is, "exceeding sinful." Sinners must themselves become the voluntary executioners of the divine sentence, that they might at the same time be witnesses of the overflowing love of Jesus, and hear him with his dying breath plead for mercy to their blood-guiltiness. The Shepherd of the Lord was indeed smitten,—the Prince of life was, by wicked hands, crucified and slain,—and besides the cruel stripes which men inflicted, he was stricken and smitten of God, in a way to us incomprehensible, though the fact is revealed.

III. The consequences of this astonishing event come now to be considered, in the third place.

The *immediate consequences* were mournful. Jesus had recently warned his disciples of what was to happen, and had expressly applied to himself the prediction in our text: "All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad," Matth. xxvi. 31. The sheep appeared accordingly to be scattered, or left unprotected, a prey to the devourer. The followers of Jesus were discouraged and dismayed. They "trusted that this was he which should have redeemed Israel," but they saw him "slain, and hanged on a tree." They saw his body taken down, and laid in the grave. Their hopes were buried with him, never, as they believed, to revive any more. They saw their enemies triumph, and they had every reason to dread their persecution. Even the insults and threats of the populace were dangerous; so that, when they met together, they were obliged to have "the doors shut for fear of the Jews." He from whom they would have expected protection was gone. Where were now their hopes of seeing the kingdom restored to Israel? The great effects expected from the miraculous powers of Jesus,—the fulfilment of prophecies, the exaltation of David's horn, and the re-establishment of his kingdom,—every thing seemed to have misgiven. They who had been waiting for the consolation of Israel, saw nothing but the overthrow of their fairest expectations. 'Happy Simeon!' would some then say, who was permitted to depart in peace, when his eyes had seen the dawning of salvation; but we who saw, as

we confidently thought, the promised "Sun of righteousness arise," have seen him also go down,—go down under a thick cloud, and when, or where, or whether he shall ever rise more, we know not.' Never did the church of Christ experience a darker hour. But happily for his people, it was not long. For the sake of an incredulous Thomas, for the sake of a mourning Peter, for all the elect disciples' sake, the time was shortened.

Let us look now to the more *remote consequences* which followed this darkest of all dispensations, the smiting of the Shepherd.

The first remarkable event which followed, was that which the disciples least expected. He whom they saw crucified, dead, and buried, was not to remain under the power of death. He was not to see corruption. He vanquished death in his own territory. He burst the bands of the grave, and became the first-fruits of them that sleep. With new glory, with new evidences of his invincible power, with new testimonies of his regal authority, "he rose again and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living."

See him next ascending into heaven, to repossess that glory wherewith he was glorified with the Father, before the world began, not forsaking his people, but looking back upon them with tender solicitude, exercising still a pastoral care over them, and promising to send them a Comforter and Monitor in his room. See him ascending in triumph, leading captivity captive, receiving gifts for men, taking possession of the kingdom on behalf of his followers, and preparing heavenly mansions for their future reception, still exercising his

mediatorial office, and continuing in heaven the prayer he had begun on earth, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me." See him, from his throne in heaven, sending down the Spirit of truth and of holiness, the Spirit of unity and of love, to establish their hearts in the belief of the truth, and to guide their feet in the way of peace.

And the sheep which were scattered, and which, it was said, "would be a prey," they, we are assured, shall be collected from all places where they have been dispersed; for this is one special work which our exalted Redeemer has yet to perform, "to gather into one the children of God that are scattered abroad," John xi. 52. And having gathered his flock together under his immediate protection, he will cherish them, and support them, and save them to the uttermost. "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be; there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel," Ezek. xxxiv. 12. 14. After feeding and leading them through their present state, though death must overtake them even upon "the mountains of Israel," yet he who vanquished death, and spoiled the grave, will not allow his own to remain in their power. He will raise them up at the last day; he will "give unto his sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand."

And is this he that was smitten to death, who now reigns in heaven, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named," and is the Head over all things to his church?—And are these they who were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd,—outcasts whom no man knew, for whom no man cared, who are now gathered into one under their divine Head, and training up for glory, and honour, and immortality? "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" What a glorious Shepherd! After having overcome all his enemies, he is set down with his Father on his throne; where he shall rule the nations until the day when he shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and shall sit on the throne of his glory. What a blessed flock! "Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, who is the shield of thy help, and the sword of thy excellency!" Once, perhaps, ye were the vilest of the vile, "thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."—"Ye shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." Instead of being "a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse," among the nations, ye shall be "a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God," Isa. lxii. 3.

But we must forbear, brethren, to pursue these views farther for the present. If we be indeed the Lord's, we have an eternity before us to spend in this delightful exercise. And how can eternity be better employ-

ed than in admiring and adoring him "who was dead, and is alive for evermore?" At present we must suspend our contemplations. It is fit that we turn our thoughts homeward, and consider how far we sustain the character of Christ's flock.

Let us, then, seriously look back, and recollect in what condition the Lord found us. Did he not find us "in a desert land, in the waste howling wilderness?" And there, were we lamenting our wretched exposed state, earnestly looking about for a path which might conduct us to a land of purity and of safety? Instead of this, were we not turning every one to his own way, and wandering on still more and more astray? Let us not, brethren, seek to disguise the real disposition of our souls in an unconverted state. To say the least, were we not "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving diverse lusts and pleasures," forgetful of God, neglecting his word, disregarding his commands, and contemning his ordinances? If we paid any regard at all to his worship or service, was it not of that careless and ineffective kind which the young man in our Lord's parable discovered, who, when his father bade him go work in his vineyard, "answered and said, I go, Sir, and went not?" If this was our backward, perverse disposition, when our Lord found us, how did he treat us? He might well have driven us from his presence, as unworthy of his care. He might have left us to follow our own course, and "to eat of the fruit of our own doings." He might have sworn in his wrath, that he would have nothing to do with such perverse creatures, and that we should never enter into his rest. Instead of this, he regarded us with the tenderest pity.

He saw us lying in our blood, and bade us live. He "had compassion, and ran" to snatch the prey out of the lion's mouth. He took us under his own immediate tuition; he "led us about, and instructed us, and kept us as the apple of his eye." Thus, like a wise and good shepherd, he watched over us, and fed us, and reared us as his own.

Now, let us remember what has been our behaviour toward this kind guardian of our souls. Have we learned to know his voice, and to distinguish it from that of strangers? Our Lord says that his sheep follow him, for they know his voice; and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers. Have we followed this gracious Keeper of Israel, that we might listen to his words, and receive his instructions? He *instructs* us in our duty, points out the way of life, walks before us, calls us to follow him, and offers his hand to conduct and support us. He *warns* us not to lean to our own understanding, not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, not to set our affections on the things of the world, not to follow a multitude to do evil, not to give place to the devil. He *encourages* us to stand fast in the faith,—to endure, as seeing him who is invisible,—to come boldly to a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,—to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life,—to persevere unto the end, holding fast the beginning of our confidence,—in a word, to be faithful unto death, and that we shall obtain the crown of life. Such are some of our Lord's precious words of instruction, warning, and encouragement. Have we,

in all these matters, proved ourselves willing disciples, and faithful soldiers? Have we stood firm in our allegiance to our divine Head, and true to his cause? What shall we answer to the Searcher of hearts? Of a truth we must acknowledge that we have strayed from him again and again,—that we have reluctantly submitted to his yoke,—that we have been tempted to wish ourselves at liberty to return to our old lusts, to submit again to our former masters,—and, regardless of him who had delivered us from our Philistian enemies, when we were, like Sampson, grinding blindfold in our prison-house, sin had suggested it would be better to resume our task and our chains together, in our old house of bondage. We must acknowledge that we have often dishonoured and offended our heavenly Master, by our distrust of his promises, so often repeated in his word, and even confirmed by his oath,—that we have dishonoured and offended him by our unprofitableness in his service, notwithstanding many exhortations, and helps, and mercies, and encouragements vouchsafed us.

Thus have we, by our ingratitude, backwardness, and disobedience, grieved the heart of our compassionate Redeemer, and contributed our part toward the smiting of our good Shepherd, who loved us, and gave himself for us. Did he weep over rebellious Jerusalem, and mourn over backsliding Israel, and her treacherous sister Judah, and must not his soul be grieved for the perverseness of such creatures as we, whom he had visited with such unmerited favour, and such distinguished mercy? Yes, our conscience testifies against us this day, that we have been cumbering his ground,—that we are not worthy of the least of all

the mercies, and of all the truth which he hath shewed us,—and that it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not cast forth as a withered branch, and utterly consumed. Yet still he is waiting that he may be gracious to us; he renews his invitations and his offers of pardon; he calls us to a feast of reconciliation, love, and joy.

Say, then, shall we now return once more to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls? Shall we not "take with us words of confession and supplication, and turn to the Lord, and say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously?" Shall we not, from our hearts, renounce both our idols and our own righteousness, saying, "Ashur shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods, for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy?" Hear what saith the divine promise, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away," Hos. xiv. 2—4. Hear again the divine invitation, addressed by him who gave his back to the smiters, even to you, whose sins redoubled every stroke, "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God. Return, ye backsliding children, I will heal your backslidings," Jer. iii. 12. 13. 22. Does not our soul reply, "Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains; truly in the Lord our God

is the salvation of Israel?" Come, then, brethren in Christ, let us take his yoke upon us, and learn of him, for he is meek and lowly in heart, and we shall yet find rest to our souls; for his yoke is easy, and his burden is light. Come ye, O house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the Lord. Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten.

SERMON II.

2 Sam. xxiii. 5.—*Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.*

David, from his earlier days, to the close of his long and varied life, was visited with many and painful afflictions. Like Him whom in spirit he called Lord, though descended of David after the flesh, he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. But sanctified affliction produces godly sorrow, and godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation. Of this, David was a most conspicuous and instructive example. From his youth, he was taught to know and worship the Lord God of Israel. After he was taken from the

sheep-fold, and brought to feed Jacob, and rule over Israel, new temptations beset him; iniquities, according to his own sorrowful confession, did at times prevail against him, and his falls were grievous. But the Lord had chosen him for a servant, therefore he did not leave him to perish in his sin. This sweet psalmist of Israel was reclaimed from the error of his way; and after wiping off his penitential tears, he again tuned his sacred harp to the praises of his own great Shepherd, who had restored his soul, and had led him anew in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake. From the manifold mercies of God to his soul, experienced through the whole course of his diversified life, David possessed an assured confidence, that the Lord had established his covenant with him,—that the God of Jacob was his everlasting portion,—that he would never fail him, nor forsake him,—and that he would build up his throne, and establish his seed to many generations. Notwithstanding this assurance, many of his troubles still remained, impaired his comfort, and broke the peace of his family. His children had in many things grieved his heart; his enemies perpetually harassed him; and, especially, in his own soul he did not find his desires and expectations accomplished, nor spiritual grace growing up to that maturity which formed a most valuable part of the promise in the covenant of his salvation.

Here we have an example of a case common to those who have been led through mercy to lay hold on the covenant of life, established through the Son of David, the great Mediator. A believer has apprehended and laid hold of this covenant; he knows it is all his salva-

tion, he feels it is all his desire, yet he has to mourn his short-comings, and the disappointment of his hopes, in some of those points which he believes to be most infallibly secured by that very covenant. This is a case that calls for tender treatment; and while we would humbly endeavour to state the believer's views of the covenant, and his experience in connection with those views, let us earnestly implore the presence and blessing of Him whose commission to his servants is still the same as ever, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people."

I. We shall state the believer's views of the covenant. Having searched the scriptures which testify of Christ, and having been led by the Spirit to the knowledge and love of the truth, the believer perceives that the covenant of his salvation is indeed an "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure."

He sees *the perfections of God illustriously displayed.* His *justice* is satisfied by the perfect obedience and sufferings of his own Son, in the human nature, who thus paid the full penalty of man's transgression, and wrought out a complete righteousness, adequate to the demands of the perfect law of God. His *mercy* is gloriously manifested in freely bestowing a full pardon, and even conferring the highest honours, on sinners, rebels, outcasts, who deserved nothing but to be consigned to "the blackness of darkness" for ever. His *sovereignty* is maintained in "doing what he will with his own;" in choosing, according to the unerring counsel of his will, the objects of his special favour; and dispensing to these, such measures of his grace and

his bounty, as appear good in his sight, whose dominion is over all, and who "giveth not account of any of his matters." His *truth* is vindicated in fulfilling his unchangeable word, that the wages of sin is death, —that, without due expiation, he will not clear the guilty,—that nothing unclean shall enter into the holy Jerusalem above,—that though heaven and earth pass away, one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled;—all which is completely accomplished in the meritorious work of the great Redeemer, and in the sanctifying operations of the Divine Spirit on the soul of a penitent sinner. Thus the honour of the divine government is secured, and all the intelligent world is made to know and acknowledge, that the righteous Jehovah loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity. The believer, contemplating the wonders of redeeming love, admires and glories in that covenant by which mercy and truth thus meet and shine forth together.

He sees *the salvation of the penitent sinner fully secured.*

Abundant provision is made for the sinner's deliverance from the penalty of the law, seeing Christ hath redeemed him from the curse of the law, "by being made a curse for him," Gal. iii. 13. Abundant provision is made for the sanctification of his depraved nature, "by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, shed on him abundantly through Jesus Christ his Saviour." Strength, wisdom, and courage, together with "the whole armour of God," are supplied to bear him through his spiritual warfare; light to guide him in his pilgrimage, consolation and

support in time of trouble. Nor is temporal safety and provision wanting; "his place of defence is the munition of rocks; bread also is given him; his water shall be sure." He sees the Lord at once a sun and a shield to his people; "Christ made unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." And he foresees the final complete glorification of his soul and body, in that bright world where there shall be no more sin nor curse, no more night, no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor pain; where the ransomed of the Lord shall live and reign with him for ever and ever.

The believer sees *the subordinate provisions of the covenant well ordered in all things.*

The Bible, the deed or instrument which contains the covenant, is preserved entire,—is published abroad to the world,—is translated, or translating into all languages, and disseminated through all lands, so that people of all nations, and kindreds, and languages, may hear, in their own tongues, the wonderful works of God. Messengers are selected and appointed, are equipped and sent forth, to make known the precious contents of the Bible, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Particular ordinances are appointed, as seals or conveyances of the blessings of the covenant, and administered in the churches to those who lawfully claim the benefit of them. Various dispensations of Providence, some of a prosperous, some of an adverse nature, directed by the Author of the covenant, serve to display the wisdom of its constitution, the suitableness and certainty of its promises, and the abundance of its resources. He sees these things further con-

firmed by the experience of those, on the one hand, who have embraced the covenant, and on the other, of those who have rejected it. While he sees Christ crucified become a stumbling-block to the unbelieving Jews, and foolishness to the philosophic Greeks, yet he sees that to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. i. 23. 24.

The believer sees *the stability and perpetuity of the covenant insured* by the immutable character of the parties engaged.

The Father has promised to the Son, that "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand;" that "he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." The Son undertakes, and performs: "I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; those whom thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost." The Holy Spirit also undertakes and carries on his work in the hearts of those whom Jesus has ransomed, till he has sanctified them wholly, and presented them without spot or blemish. None of these parties can fail;—the word of him who cannot lie is passed. As if this were of itself insufficient to satisfy men slow of heart to believe, he hath added his oath; and because he could swear by no greater, he hath sworn by himself,—that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, his word and his oath, the blessings of the unchangeable covenant might be confirmed for ever to believers. Mercies thus unalterably secured, may well be called "the sure mercies of David." They cannot be exhausted; the source from which they flow cannot fail;

they are like the pure river of the water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and flowing for ever and ever.

The Lord takes pleasure in repeating, in his own person, the assurance of the endless continuance of his loving-kindness toward his chosen: "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee," Isa. liv. 10.

Having thus stated the views which the believer is taught to form, and habitually to entertain, of the covenant of his salvation, we shall now inquire,

II. What is his experience in connection with those views.

While the believer's faith is lively, and his views of the provisions and blessings of the covenant are clear, he rejoices in them as "all his salvation, and all his desire." He knows there is salvation in none else; that in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of the mountains; that in the Lord alone is the salvation of Israel, Jer. iii. 23. He does not wish for it in any other way than this, which is so honourable to God, and so secure to the sinner. His chief desire is to become a full partaker of this salvation, and to glorify God by a life and conversation becoming this glorious scheme of redemption. But here he has at times to mourn a sore disappointment. The Lord does not always grant him his heart's desire in the manner, and season, and measure that he expected. He desires to be spiritually-minded,—to be raised above

the world,—to have his affections set on things above, —to be wholly resigned to his Lord's will, and able to say, in all things, "Not my will, but thine be done," —to have his whole temper and spirit conformed to the pattern of his Master's spirit,—seeking to have the same mind which was in Christ, and to learn of him to be meek and lowly in heart. In endeavouring to attain this blessed temper, he does not trust to his own powers; if he did, his failure would be no wonder; but he has respect to the covenant, and looks to its promises: "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me," Jer. xxxii. 40. Notwithstanding this, he often finds reason to complain that "iniquities prevail against him;" that backwardness to duty, discontent with his portion, or with something in his lot, impatience of temper, worldliness of spirit, distrust in Providence, are often working in his heart; though to will be present with him, yet how to perform that which is good he finds not; though he delights in the law of God after the inward man, yet he finds a law, that when he would do good, evil is present with him, Rom. vii. 18. &c. While the everlasting covenant is all his salvation and his desire, his confidence and delight, still a body of sin, a body of death, is his burden and his grief.

The believer desires to be fitted for his divine Master's service; to be more fervent in spirit, more active, and more successful, in any work in which he is employed; to be more fruitful in every good word and work; and thus to glorify God in his body and spirit.

In his hopes of attaining to fruitfulness, he does not depend on his own exertions, as if they alone were sufficient, though he knows they are required; but he looks to the provisions of the covenant, and thence draws his encouragement to labour and exertion. "I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.—From me is thy fruit found," Hos. xiv. 5. &c. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." But neither doth this grow with him according to his desires and his hopes; he still finds, to his grief and mortification, daily cause to accuse himself of sloth and barrenness,—to lament his leanness and unprofitableness; that after all his flattering hopes of making a fair and fruitful show, and accomplishing a great deal, he is little else than an unprofitable servant, an unfruitful cumberer of the ground.

The believer having tasted that the Lord is gracious, and experienced the sweetness of communion with him, desires to have constant fellowship with his heavenly Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; to be daily beholding the beauty of the Lord, and drawing water out of the wells of salvation; and so to have continual joy and peace in believing. And in this point also, he has respect to the covenant; he remembers the words of his Lord, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full," John xv. 11. "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full," chap. xvi. 24. But here, too, he is often sorely disappointed. Temptations arise, and his faith is clouded,—his prayers are hindered,—his communion with God is disturbed or interrupted,—

his hopes are overcast,—his joy is changed into sorrow and mourning.

He desires to see his own house, and the household of faith, flourishing. With respect to his children, he can call God to witness that he has no higher wish, no greater joy, than to see that his children walk in the truth; and whatever be their lot in the world, that they may have their portion with God's people. So also for his brethren in Christ, his heart's desire and prayer is, that their souls may prosper,—that their light may shine,—that the interests of Christ's kingdom may be advanced,—and that the children of Zion may be joyful in their King. In breathing out these desires, he takes encouragement from the promises of the covenant:—"Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion, and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life; yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel," Psal. cxxviii. 4. 5. 6. In this case, too, he has to mourn, at times, the disappointment of his fair expectations. A darling Benjamin is forced away from his father's embraces,—a favourite Joseph is, perhaps, torn by a wild beast,—an accomplished Absalom becomes an undutiful rebellious son,—and a Hophni, or Phinehas, though well educated, and in the priest's office, become abandoned to vice, and almost break their father's heart. "His house is not so with God" as he wished and hoped,—and this is a cause of sore lamentation. Neither does he see the church of Christ prospering in his land, and in his day. Lukewarmness prevails,—the love of many waxes cold,—the godly man faileth, and is taken away from the

evil to come,—the godly pastor, who fed the Lord's little flock in the wilderness, is called home, and the babes and sucklings are prematurely weaned from the breast. When the pillars of the church, the champions of the faith, are removed, irreligion and profanity become bold, and the pious remnant seek for shelter in private retirements; they enter into their chambers, and shut the doors about them; they hide themselves for a moment, until the indignation be overpast, Isa. xxvi. 20. The zealous believer sees, with grief and indignation, the cross of Christ despised, and the enemies of the cross lifting their heads with daring confidence. Alas! he cries, "is the Lord's hand shortened that it cannot save, or his ear heavy that it cannot hear?"—When his enemies rage, and make a noise even in the house of the Lord, Lam. ii. 7. where is the Lord God of Elijah? where is the promise of his coming? "Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? Hath thy soul loathed Zion? We look for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble," Jer. xiv. 19.

Thus does the believer often complain and mourn, that his desire is not yet fulfilled, that "the Lord maketh it not to grow." Instead of advancing, he suspects himself to be losing ground. He is reaching forth, indeed, to the things which are before; but the more he reaches and lifts his eyes, he only sees the greater length before him, and finds that perfection is the farther off. He is almost ready to faint and give over, "because of the way." For a moment he is tempted to doubt the sufficiency and stability of the covenant; but his faith is strengthened, and he dares not doubt. He is ready,

however, to doubt his own interest in the covenant, and to think that his iniquities have separated between him and his God, and that his sins have hid the Lord's face from him, that he will not hear, Isa. lix. 2. This hangs heavy on his soul, and makes him go mournfully from day to day.

Let us endeavour to address to a mourner in this situation,

1. A word of encouragement. The case calls for encouragement and comfort. Although a believer should be left for a time under sorrow and discouragement; yet it is not the will of their heavenly Father that one of these little ones should perish. His command to his ministering messengers concerning such, is still, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people."

Consider the promises applicable to your own particular situation.

You complain of carnality, backwardness, coldness of affection, besetting and indwelling sins defiling your soul, hindering or corrupting your duties, marring your comforts, and still drawing your heart from God, or hiding from you the light of his countenance. But the Lord assures you that, in time, all that you complain of shall be purged away: "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin," Isa. i. 25. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you," Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Paul complained as you do now: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" But he found comfort at hand;

" I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. vii. 24. 25.

You complain of unfruitfulness; that your own graces do not grow; that you are not profitable to others; that, instead of glorifying God with your body and spirit, you rather dishonour him by a barren profession, and a useless life; that you are cumbering the ground, and only fit to be cut down and cast forth as a withered branch. But O! thou self-accusing mourner, hear the word of the Lord: " I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground;" " I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out," Isa. xliv. 3. Zeph. iii. 19. " They shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine;" for " from me is thy fruit found," Hos. xiv. 7. 8.

You complain of want of communion with God; that you have lost the cheering fellowship you once enjoyed with him in his ordinances; you " go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but you cannot perceive him." You fear that the Lord hath cast you off; that his mercy is gone for ever; that even his promise doth fail for evermore. But hearken, O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit; and what doth he say? " For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee; in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer," Isa. liv. 6. 7. 11. " When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel

will not forsake them ; I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the vallies; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water," Isa. xli. 17. 18.

You complain of the want of grace and piety in your family, or in the church ; and you ask with painful longing, when will salvation come to your house? " Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?" Psal. lxxxv. 6. But you may still take to yourself, and plead the promise made to the church of old, " I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground : I will pour my spirit on thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children," Isa. xliv. 3. 4. liv. 13. Behold, and read; hear, and understand; ask, and plead, and be not faithless but believing; and thou shalt yet see the glory of God !

Consider your own past experience.

Recollect how it fared at times with your bodily health, when you said, with Hezekiah, " I shall go to the gates of the grave, I am deprived of the residue of my years." Notwithstanding your apprehensions, the Lord stretched out his hand, and healed you, and bade you live; so that you cried out, with the same pious king, " What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it." Doth God take care for the body? Doth he take care for the beast of the field which he hath made? And will he not much more care for the soul which he hath redeemed? Will he not heal your spiritual diseases, and relieve your pains, and make you to sing, with the king of Judah, " Behold, for peace I

had great bitterness; but thou hast, in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption, for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back," Isa. xxxviii. 10. 15. 17.

Recollect how it fared with your soul, when at times your spirit was overwhelmed within you, and the waters had gone over your soul. Yet then did the Lord visit you. He heard your cry; he brought you up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay; he set your feet upon a rock, and established your goings, Psal. xl. 2. Even then, when your soul fainted within you, you remembered the Lord, and your prayer came in unto him, into his holy temple, Jonah ii. 7.

You complain, that whereas in former times you had falls, and also recoveries; yet now you find little change, but a constant languor and deadness of spirit, even "a perpetual backsliding." Then your complaint is the same that David uttered long ago, "The enemy hath persecuted my soul, he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead; therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me, my heart within me is desolate," Psal. cxliii. 3. 4.—But, with David, do you also remember the days of old? Who formerly raised you up and recovered you? Who restored your soul? None else than your gracious Shepherd, whose charge you still are. "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life," Rom. v. 10. As sure as Jesus died, and now lives, so surely they who have died with Christ unto sin, shall live with him also. Lazarus was once delivered from the power of death; yet a second time he sunk into the

grave. Is it, for that reason, the less likely that he whom Jesus thus honoured, shall have part at last in the resurrection of the just?

Formerly, your heavenly Teacher gave you shorter lessons; now, he gives you heavier and longer tasks. He tries your strength, and makes you feel your own weakness, that your strength may be in God. For two tedious years Joseph pined in prison, and concluded that his friend, the chief butler, would never remember him more. But his God had not forgotten him; and even then, his highest exaltation was near at hand. Even in his confinement Joseph had one support, that the Lord showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. If the Lord has still given you favour in the sight of some of his own servants and people, esteem it as showing you mercy, and as a token for good. Your deliverance from trouble is fast approaching. If the wilderness grow more dreary as you advance, yet you are always drawing nearer its confines, nearer to the water of Jordan. If the river become deeper as you wade through, yet you are assuredly approaching the further bank, the boundary of Canaan, the fields of your rest. The days of your mourning will soon be ended, for "your complete salvation is nearer than when ye first believed;" nearer, by many steps, than it was on the happy "day of your espousals," when nothing but the voice of gladness and singing was heard in your tabernacle.

2. Suffer me to add a word of admonition. Remember you are yet in the body. You bear about with you a body of sin and of death, of which you cannot be wholly freed in this world. While you cannot sup-

pose that you are already perfect, and need not expect to become so here, yet press on toward perfection. Let not your discouragements hinder your exertions. Let not weeping hinder working. Still sow, though in tears. In due time you shall reap, and bring your sheaves rejoicing home. Bear up under your present burdens. You will soon cast off that "vile body," and it will incumber you no longer. "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he will strengthen thy heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord," Psal. xxvii. 14. Remember you are yet in the wilderness. Do not expect that here you can feed daily on the grapes of Eshcol. A rich cluster may, at a time, be brought to your hand, but it is not the native growth of this barren soil. You may find some "bitter herbs" mixed with your sweetest portion, but they are of a salutary purifying virtue. Bless God for your daily manna,—the word, and prayer, and daily ordinary duties, comforts, and opportunities. Use these diligently and thankfully, when richer cordials are not given. They will be as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones, Prov. xvi. 24. Remember you are yet in the midst of enemies, your warfare is not yet accomplished. Your enemies may have been put to flight, but they are not yet banished from the land. Do not expect the conqueror's crown, while you are but in the heat of the conflict. The time is not yet fully come for putting off your armour, but be strong and of good courage, be not afraid, neither be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you whithersoever you go, Josh. i. 9. Even now, the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith

the Lord of hosts. He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, skilfully and tenderly conducting the process, until he shall have purged away thy dross, and taken away all thy tin. Jesus, the ever-living Mediator, is even now praying, nay, he hath already prayed, and obtained his request, that your faith fail not till the combat be ended,—till the victory over the "last enemy" be complete,—till the crown of life be obtained,—till you come to Zion with singing, and everlasting joy upon your head,—till you obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall for ever flee away.

As to such as desire not the salvation promised in the everlasting covenant, we cannot conclude without addressing to you this affectionate counsel,—"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near."—"Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Amen.

SERMON III.

MATTH. xiv. 31.—*O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*

THERE is a wonderful copiousness in the word of God. Its precepts furnish directions for our conduct, its promises encouragement, its threatenings warning and admonition. In the historical parts, we often find all these combined together. The incidents recorded, when viewed in their various circumstances, and regarded as exhibiting characters and examples either of good or of evil, often suggest direction, or encouragement, or warning, in a way at once familiar and impressive. Especially if a person finds, in his own experience, any particulars which bear a resemblance to the case recorded, then the instructions arising out of the narrative may be the more easily transferred, and applied to

his own case. The incident in the passage before us, ought to be regarded, and may easily be improved, in this manner.

Peter was distinguished among his fellow-disciples by an ardour of spirit, which, while it testified his warm attachment to his Master, sometimes hurried him on to actions or expressions that drew upon him a sharp reproof. His rashness needed frequently to be checked, as well as his mistakes to be corrected. His forwardness and want of consideration, at times betrayed him into a self-confidence, which his Lord corrected, by allowing him to feel the unhappy consequences of it. This was the case in that remarkable instance of his denying all personal knowledge of Christ, when he was left to fall most lamentably from the height of his fancied fortitude, in which he so confidently trusted. On the occasion recorded in the chapter before us, when Jesus, miraculously walking on the water, approached the ship in which the disciples were, Peter, more confident and forward than the rest, called out to his Lord, whom he was overjoyed to behold so near him, desiring permission to prove his intrepidity and attachment to Jesus, by committing himself to the boisterous element, in order to meet and salute his beloved Master. Our Lord saw fit to correct his forwardness, by granting his request. The event served to shew the too-confident disciple, that neither his fortitude nor his faith were equal to such a trial as he rashly solicited. His fortitude failed, and "he was afraid;" his faith failed, and "he began to sink." Jesus, who is ever a present help in time of trouble, regarded the piteous cry of his disciple; he stretched out his hand, caught hold of him as

he was sinking in the waves, and saved his life. This timely aid, and signal deliverance, were accompanied with a mild but piercing reproof, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Many can say that they have never been so rash or fool-hardy as Peter, and so never drew upon themselves a reproof such as he received. This may be very true. Many have not attained so much of the Christian spirit, as to expose them to Peter's fault. They do not possess such love to Jesus, as to expose their persons to danger, or to venture any thing for his sake. Others, however, who may possess real love to Jesus, but not Peter's honest though inconsiderate ardour, may, notwithstanding, be chargeable with his unbelief. To them the reproof in the text may be found applicable, and may furnish matter of profitable meditation.

Our Lord's words to his faithful though rash disciple, may be considered as administering *admonition*, *reproof*, and *encouragement*.

I. Our Lord here *admonishes* Peter of what he appears to have forgotten. He had seen Jesus perform many miracles for the preservation of men's lives; it was but the evening before, that he had seen him feed upwards of five thousand persons in the wilderness. He had often heard him declare his general providential care over his creatures; "If God feed the fowls of the air, and clothe the grass of the field, will he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Nay, he had heard him express his peculiar love towards his disciples, calling them by the tenderest names, (Matth. xii. 49.); and heard him declare the arduous but ho-

nourable service to which they were destined; "Ye shall be brought before governors and kings, for my sake, but fear them not, for a hair of your head shall not perish." All the important predictions, all the tender assurances of support, which his divine Master had uttered, seem to have, for the moment, escaped the recollection of Peter; the apprehension of present danger overwhelmed his mind, and he gave up all for lost. Much did he need to be put in mind of what he had formerly seen and heard, to strengthen his drooping faith.

Brethren, we here behold an image of ourselves. What great and precious promises has Jesus left us on record, not only of temporal provision and preservation, but much more of ample grace to help in time of need! Promises so plain, that he may run who reads them,—so express, that they leave no doubt in the mind of him who is sincerely disposed to receive them, —so numerous and various, that they will be found to apply to every case of the believer's trial or his exercise, his pilgrimage or his warfare! These divine promises have been tried to the utmost, and they have never failed. Saints of old have recorded, with joy and praise, the faithfulness of God, and the stability of his promises; and though they were often made to wait for a time, yet they were not disappointed, Psal. xl. 1—3. Have not we ourselves, in seasons of distress, laid hold on some of the divine promises? Have we not found, in the word itself, a firm support? And at length, in its accomplishment, have we not received even more than we expected? Yet, after all that we have learned, either from the experience of others, or

from our own, how ready are we, in any new trouble, to lose sight of all that the Lord has told us, or taught us to expect, and all that he has pledged his truth to perform! Not only do we thus forget his gracious word, but all that he has actually done for us; all the deliverances he has wrought, all the mercy and truth he has showed us, disappear from our view in time of sore distress. Like the desponding Israelites in the wilderness, who forgot God their Saviour, who had done great things in Egypt; we remember not the multitude of his mercies, we remember not his hand, nor the day when he delivered us from the enemy. How needful is it for us to be put in mind of those things which so intimately concern us, which belong so essentially to our peace! And how thankful should we be to our gracious Guardian, who bears with our heedlessness, and condescends to employ various means, in his providence, to remind us of his forgotten word! Our Lord's caution to Peter, on another occasion, might have saved him from the grievous sin of denying his Master. But he forgot it; and it was not till the cock crew once and a second time, and his Lord gave him a significant look, that Peter called to mind at last the word which Jesus said unto him. The Lord is still, by many impressive dispensations, both in his general providence, and in his particular dealings with individuals, admonishing us as he did his people of old, "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations," Deut. xxxii. 6. 7. It becomes us to receive, humbly and thankfully, such faithful admonitions, and to confess with the Psalmist, "This is

my infirmity," my sinful and much lamented infirmity; "but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High; I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember thy wonders of old," Psal. lxxvii. 10. 11.

II. The words of our Lord to his disciples, administered a seasonable and salutary *reproof*. If to overlook or forget the mercies and promises of God be a sinful infirmity, to doubt his faithful word is much more sinful, and must expose us to sharper reproof. This appears to have been, at least in some measure, the sin of Peter, as is evident from the terms in which our Lord reproved him, "O thou of *little faith*, wherefore didst thou *doubt?*" It is the very essence of unbelief to doubt the truth of God's word. And surely, my friends, this sin belongs not to Peter alone? We dare not say so, when our conscience tells us that we must plead guilty to the same charge. A sinful timidity often makes us shrink from opposition or danger, even when we have the assurance of divine support. It makes us afraid to venture on God's express promise of protection, in those very cases in his own service in which we most need it, and, therefore, ought most confidently to look for it. This was remarkably exemplified in the Israelites, when they heard the discouraging report of the spies concerning the formidable appearance of the inhabitants of Canaan. "All the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron; and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had

died in the land of Egypt! or, would God we had died in the wilderness!" &c. Numb. xiv. 1. Notwithstanding the repeated assurances which this people had received, that God would be with them, to strengthen and to prosper them, yet they believed not his promise; "they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation," Psal. lxxviii. 22.; but their heart fainted within them, and then "they walked in their own counsels." They provoked the Lord to pronounce that pointed rebuke, "How long will this people provoke me? how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?" Numb. xiv. 11. Does not this furnish a parallel to our own case and conduct, on many less important occasions? The path of duty lies, for the most part, plain before us. In this, we may be sure, that the Lord, the great Shepherd of his sheep, will be our guide, and will make our way to prosper. But there are some apparent difficulties in the way. Some resistance may be made to our best endeavours. Our opponents are strong, or numerous, or artful, or confident and overbearing; our adherents are few, and nowise distinguished by talents or fortitude. We shrink from every encounter, we dread its issue, and hardly dare venture to trust our cause to Jehovah, who is greater and wiser than all, whose word is more stedfast than the "great mountains," whose promise has been proved, and whose protection has been found more than sufficient, when every human support has failed. "No man stood with me," said the faithful apostle, "but all forsook me; notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and

strengthened me; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion," 2 Tim. iv. 17. How does the faith and resolution of many a feeble saint reprove our unbelief and timidity! "Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance," Heb. xi. 35.

With such patterns before us, of unshaken trust in God, such evidence of the stability of his promises, we surely deserve, in the language of Paul, to be "sharply rebuked," if we be not "sound in the faith." And when we look back on our own distrust, when we think how we dishonoured Him who is the faithful and true Witness, by questioning his ability, his wisdom, or his covenant love; when we see that his forbearance was still superior to our provocations, that he did not forsake us, nor say to us, "Be it unto you according to your unbelief;" when our hearts become awake to these considerations, and we are humbled under a sense of our ungrateful requital of our Lord's kindness, surely we must feel a sharp, though a tender reproof in these words, when addressed to ourselves, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? 'After all the kindness you had experienced, and all the pledges of my love which were actually in your possession, how could you doubt my truth, which was so indisputably proved, or my faithfulness, which was so firmly established?'

III. These words of our Lord, while they reprove our unbelief, may also be considered as affording *encouragement* to our faith.

Though the Lord is at times justly displeased with

his children, yet he will not cast them off; though in a little wrath he hide his face for a moment, and even visit their transgressions with the rod, yet his loving-kindness will he not utterly take from them; he will not retract his promise, he will not break his covenant, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. His very chastisements are an evidence of his paternal care and love, for "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." His reproofs assure us that he hath not forgotten to be gracious, nor cast away his people.

In this view, they are expressly fitted to encourage our hopes, and strengthen our confidence in the divine support. Had the Lord determined to cast off his undutiful and disobedient children, he would have told them so at the same time that he reproached them for their unfaithfulness. Thus he rebuked the Israelites, and threatened to withdraw his protection from them altogether: "Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, and from the Philistines? yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods; wherefore I will deliver you no more," Judges x. 13. But when, as in the case of Peter, the Lord's reproof is evidently intended to drive away unbelief, it is equivalent to a renewal of his promises. It admonishes us not to doubt any more,—it reminds us that we never had reason to doubt God's faithfulness in time past,—and assures us that we shall never have reason to doubt it in time to come. "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through

the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour," Isa. xliii. 1. 2. 3. Thus, while our Lord, by his word and his providence, appears to chide our distrust, and to say, with a voice of disappointed love, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" he at the same time is seen to smile through his displeasure, and to address us in accents of tender concern for our future stability, saying, "Be no more faithless, but believing."

How emphatically does this short address express our Lord's feelings! It shows,

1. His tender concern for his beloved disciple's safety. While Peter rashly supposed that his own fortitude was equal to the trial which he courted, his Master knew well his weakness; and though he saw fit to convince Peter, to his cost, of the false estimate he had made of his own graces, yet he determined not to forsake him in his extremity, nor leave him to perish. One cry from the trembling disciple was sufficient to reach the heart of his compassionate Master. Jesus instantly interposed; he "immediately stretched forth his hand, and caught him." Before he pronounced the merited reproof, he raised him from the waters with such a secure hold and powerful arm, as at once removed Peter's fears, and assured him of safety. Can any one, after this, question the tender concern which Jesus entertains for the safety of those who earnestly implore his help? Can any doubt his ability to save, or imagine that his aid will arrive too late? Is any

one ready to be overwhelmed with the billows of affliction, or temptation, or fear, or despondency? Look to Jesus, who was himself tempted in all things even as you are. Behold him on the same element on which you are tossed, stilling the tempestuous winds, and rebuking the raging waves! Hear him thus putting to silence the enemies that harass your soul, and saying, "Touch ye not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." Hear his voice cheering your drooping spirits with the most encouraging assurances: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee," Isa. liv. 10. In every situation of perplexity or danger, think of Peter sinking in the mighty waters, yet rescued by the strong hand, the outstretched arm, of his gracious Lord, who never forsakes his own in the time of distress, never fails them in the hour of trial. "His mercy endureth for ever, his faithfulness to all generations."

2. We also perceive, in this expression of our Lord, a painful disappointment at Peter's want of faith. We read, on a particular occasion, that Jesus, looking round on the by-standers, was "grieved for the hardness of their hearts." His pure spirit must have been often vexed with the insensibility and obstinacy of hardened sinners; and no less grieved with the folly, the prejudice, the backwardness, and indocility of those whom he had taken under his own immediate tuition, and laboured to instruct out of his own mouth. After all that Peter had already learned, and seen, and experienced of his Master's care, it could not but grieve the heart of Jesus

to find his disciple, on any emergency, still ready to doubt his Master's love and tender concern for his safety. In similar terms of sore disappointment and tender remonstrance, does the Lord, in his word, complain of those who would not trust his love, nor depend on his kindness: "O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me," Micah vi. 3. "What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they have gone far from me, and have walked after vanity?" Jer. ii. 5. "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?" Jer. ii. 31. Alas! how often have we ourselves thus grieved the soul of our compassionate Redeemer, by our doubts, and fears, and despondency, at the very time that he was employing the fittest means in his providence, and the powerful energies of his Spirit, to do us good! "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I will offend so no more."

3. Once more, we may discover here, as on numberless other occasions, our Lord's determined purpose to deliver his own people from death and destruction,—a determination not to be altered by any failure, or even any provocation, on their part. If their strength or courage fail, he will renew it, and give them fresh vigour; if their faith stagger, yet he will revive it; as in the case of this very disciple, when Jesus told him that Satan desired to have him; but, added our Lord, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Neither will their sins or backslidings be allowed to disappoint his gracious purposes toward them. "I will heal your backslidings."—"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remem-

ber thy sins," Isa. xliii. 25. Having once chosen the objects on whom he fixes his love, he will continue to watch over them,—he will be with them in trouble,—when fallen he will raise them up,—he will deliver them, and honour them. At times, indeed, when they turn aside from his holy commandments, he will regard them with grief and displeasure, and will sharply reprove their iniquities; yet "his loving-kindness he will not utterly take from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail." Often did Jesus find occasion to reprove this chosen disciple; but such was his unchangeable love, that he would by no means cast him off, nor cease to teach and discipline him, till he had made him a zealous intrepid apostle, who laboured and suffered to the last in his Master's cause. When we think what is often the frowardness, the impatience, the fretfulness, the distrust, and unbelief of many in whom the Lord determines to glorify his free grace, and of whom he will hereafter say to his Father, "Those whom thou gavest me have I kept, and none of them is lost,"—we may well exclaim, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," Micah vii. 18. 19.

The view which has been taken of Peter's case, and our Lord's condescending kindness to him, strongly inculcates upon us a lesson of *caution*, *humility*, *gratitude*, and *confidence*. It is a good maxim, always to trust,

but *not to tempt* providence. To expose our persons to danger, or our principles to trial, without a call of duty, but merely to make an experiment on our strength or fortitude, is not obedience, but rashness; it is not of faith, but from presumption. Our Lord discountenanced such presumption, in the reply he made to the tempter's suggestion, to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. Only, while we would avoid the forwardness of Peter, in soliciting an unnecessary trial, it behoves us to beware lest we timorously shrink from a plain call of duty, though attended with manifest danger. We may not call evil good, or put timidity for caution. When our Lord says "follow me," nothing should then be allowed to keep us back.

A sense of our backwardness in our Master's cause, and of our distrust in his promised aid, ought ever to keep us *humble*. We are so ready at one time to trust, like Peter, to our own untried strength, and at another time to distrust even the Almighty's experienced power and faithfulness, that the least reflection on our instability and inconsistency, may always teach us a lowly opinion of our attainments in holiness. Our gracious Lord does not confine his care or his favours to one, or to a few of his people. While he watches over the safety of his church throughout the world, he is as attentive to every individual who solicits his aid, as if he had but that one object of his care.

How *grateful* ought each of us to be for the support and deliverance he has often vouchsafed to ourselves! We should be careful to mark, and to record in our memories, every such instance; and to stir up our souls to gratitude for the watchful care of the good Shep-

herd over us, and the seasonable aid he has often granted to us. Doubtless there was new force added to Peter's attachment, and a new song of praise put in his mouth. So ought every new, unmerited favour which we receive, to add a new fold to the tie which binds us to our Redeemer, and a new measure to the song with which we celebrate his praise. If we have, on various occasions, experienced the Lord's faithfulness, and seen the wisdom of his dealings, even where we had been tempted to repine and distrust, let us learn for the future, to *confide* unreservedly in him who hath said, "I will never leave thee, no, I will never forsake thee." Let us hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; and take heed "lest there be in us an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

Before concluding, it may be proper to subjoin one caution. A person reading these words of our Lord, and applying them to himself, might perhaps suppose that they enforce a confident, unfounded persuasion of one's own salvation, by representing any doubt on that head as reprehensible. Such a sense, we know, has been put upon the words, as if our Lord here rebuked every one for being weak in faith, who entertained a doubt of his soul being in a state of salvation. Nothing can be more remote from the doctrine of scripture, than for a sinner to set out on his exercise of faith, by believing himself to be already in a state of salvation.—It were much more consonant to truth, to believe himself in a state of condemnation, and to make this one of the first articles of his creed. To guard against such a false application of the text before us, it may be sufficient to observe, that the object of saving faith, which

all are required to believe on the authority of God, and condemned for not believing, is *revealed truth.* Whatsoever God hath expressly declared, that we are bound to receive as true. But it is plain, that no where in the Bible is any thing revealed concerning the state of any individual to whom the truths of scripture are addressed. The state of each individual is to be discovered by examination, and by inference from what is revealed. The rule on this point is not, 'Believe that you are in the faith,' but "Examine yourself, whether you be in the faith or not; prove yourself," 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Believe what is revealed; that the justice of God is inflexible, and must be satisfied; that his mercy is unbounded, and extends to the chief of sinners; that Christ is able to save to the uttermost; that he is willing to receive all who come to him for life; that he has sent a message of grace to *you*, and invites *you* to come to him, and promises that you will find rest to your soul. Believe this, and you *must* love him. He will manifest his love to you. The fruit of such a blessed intercourse will be, holiness of heart and life, joy and peace in believing, and the end everlasting life.—Believe this, and you shall be saved.

SERMON IV.

LUKE x. 11.—*Notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.*

THE adorable perfections of the blessed God claim our admiration in every point of view; not only as they are most excellent in themselves, but also as they harmonize with one another. One attribute gives occasion for the exercise of another, and both serve to display each other's glory. The diffusion of happiness which the divine goodness prompts, gives occasion for the exercise of wisdom, in appointing the most proper means for attaining the happiness of the creatures. This, in its turn, gives room for the display of almighty power, in executing the plans which consummate wisdom had devised. So, in like manner, the

justice of God dooms to punishment, those who transgress his holy law; for it is a part of his character, that he will by no means clear the guilty. The condemnation of transgressors, gives occasion for exercising mercy toward those whom justice had condemned. Moreover, this exercise of mercy, in offering pardon to condemned sinners, affords the occasion, in some cases, of a further display of justice. If the free offer of pardon, and unmerited favour, to guilty condemned creatures, be contemptuously rejected, or wantonly slighted, justice then resumes her rights, renews her claims, and demands sevenfold vengeance. This accords perfectly with the common sense of mankind. If a convicted criminal despises the king's pardon, or indolently neglects to avail himself of offered mercy, the universal sentiment of the public would be, Then let him die the death. The decision of the divine oracle is the same. "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" Heb. x. 28. 29. Among the earliest commissions which Christ gave to his apostles, to go and preach the gospel, he instructed them to warn every one expressly of the fatal consequences of neglecting it. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Also in the passage before us, "Into whatsoever city ye enter,

and they receive you, heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you; notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

These emphatic words I shall first endeavour to *explain*, and then to *apply*.

I. Explain. The kingdom of God, or, the kingdom of heaven, is an expression which frequently occurs in the gospels. Like many expressions in common language, it is taken in different acceptations, but all closely related to each other. It often signifies the society of those who compose the mediatorial kingdom of Christ; either in their imperfect state on earth, and then it is the church of Christ in the world; or advanced to a state of perfection in heaven, and then it is the kingdom of glory. It sometimes means the reign of Christ, and the outward administration of the gospel. John the Baptist preached in the wilderness, saying, "Repent ye, for the kindom of heaven is at hand." Sometimes it signifies the constitution of Christ's spiritual kingdom, as distinguished from the kingdoms of the world; "My kingdom is not of this world." In the passage before us, where it occurs twice, it seems to imply the blessings which are dispensed and enjoyed under Christ's reign,—pardon of sin,—the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit,—peace, hope, and joy in believing. These are the be-

nefits which Christ was humbled to procure, and exalted to bestow on his people. They are the blessings which himself, in the course of his ministration, published abroad when he preached good tidings, and proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord. And they are the same blessings which he commissioned his messengers to proclaim to all nations, even to the end of the world. These blessings, which belong exclusively to the kingdom of Christ, may be said, in the words of our text, to "come nigh," when they are brought to our view, and placed within our reach. This may be done in two ways; 1. By the outward dispensations of Providence; and, 2. By the inward operations of the Holy Spirit.

1. When the gospel is faithfully preached, when the messenger of truth, feeling the importance of his charge, addresses perishing sinners, in his Divine Master's name, and meekly, affectionately, yet confidently, sets before them life and death, a blessing and a curse,—death by the sentence of a holy and violated law, and life through the mediation of a crucified, yet ever-living Saviour; when he earnestly calls his hearers to choose life, and to escape from the wrath which is to come, pointing the way, as the angels did who brought Lot out of Sodom, to the mountain of salvation, and urging them to speed their flight thither; when these blessings are thus plainly and authoritatively held forth to the acceptance of sinners, contrasted with the miseries from which they are rescued, then may it be justly said, that the kingdom of God is brought nigh. This is the precise application of the expression in the text before us, where the apostles are directed to pro-

claim to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, that Christ and his benefits were within their reach, and offered freely to their acceptance.

The same truths are exhibited, and the same invitations given, in the word of God itself, when read either privately or publicly in the congregation, in the family, or in the closet; and when expounded and applied in the writings of a judicious expositor, or by the observations of an intelligent and pious head of a family. The kingdom of God is, in this manner also, brought nigh to readers and hearers, to children and domestics.

The communications of pious friends, their occasional remarks in conversation, their more special admonitions, their affectionate counsels, their faithful cautions, delivered in the spirit of Christ, supported by his precepts and doctrines, or conveyed in his own words; these are to be considered as cases in which the truths of religion are familiarly but impressively presented to view, and the kingdom of God brought nigh. In the house of mourning, and in the chamber of the sick, the serious language of a pious visitor, the affecting confessions of a dying penitent, or the animating exhortations of a departing saint, may strongly exhibit the principles and the power of the gospel. Nay, the solemn warnings, pronounced with awful energy from the scaffold, by the awakened criminal on the verge of eternity,—his reference to instructions disregarded, conscience violated, the law of God broken, and the gospel despised,—the earnest admonition given to survivors to take warning, to repent, to seek an interest in Christ, as the only support at the hour of death; this address

brings death, judgment, and eternity, the effects of sin, the need of mercy, and the value of a Saviour, to the view of the surrounding crowd. Even in such a scene as this, the kingdom of God is brought nigh unto them.

The sacraments of the New Testament are calculated to exhibit to the senses the leading facts and doctrines of the gospel. The administration of the sacraments in the church serves to hold forth, to the view of the world, a representation of the blessings which are the objects of our faith, and the foundation of our hope. Wherever men have been assembled as spectators, though not partakers of these ordinances, to them Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth crucified among them; and therefore to them, in an eminent manner, the kingdom of God has come nigh.

The gospel of the grace of God possesses a sanctifying energy, and where it is duly received, it comes, not in word only, but in power. Blessed be God, there are not a few who have become the subjects of the divine Spirit's purifying influence in Christ Jesus; and who, walking in the truth, and shining in the beauty of holiness, display the efficacy of those divine truths which they have received; they bear in no inconsiderable degree, perhaps in rich luxuriance, the fruits of meekness and temperance, honesty and fidelity, piety and humility. Wherever examples of this kind are to be seen,—wherever the "children of the kingdom" are found walking together in love, and shining as lights in the world,—or even where one individual is distinguished by a steady consistent profession of the gospel, and adorning his profession by a life of godliness and hones-

ty, in this case also the truths of the gospel are exhibited in their practical influence, its benefits are held up to view, and the kingdom of God is brought nigh to the beholders.

May it not, my friends, be truly affirmed, that in one or more of these ways,—by the reading or the preaching of the word of God,—by the communication of pious friends or acquaintances,—by the public administration of gospel-ordinances,—or by the life and example of upright Christians, the kingdom of God has, at one time or other, come nigh to each of you; or rather, has it not at all times been nigh to every one of you?

2. But, further, we may say that the truths and the benefits of the gospel have not only been held forth to view, and placed within reach, but that, with respect to many, these have been brought still nearer home, and placed in more immediate contact with the feelings. One may not only have heard of the important things of eternity by the hearing of the ear, but he may at times have thought deeply of these things.—Losing sight for a moment of the concerns of the present life, he may have felt an irresistible conviction, that the care of his immortal soul is the grand concern, the one thing needful; and that the interests of eternity, vast eternity, ought to be principally regarded. He may have been powerfully convinced, that the justice of God is not to be satisfied with cold confessions and empty apologies,—that the wrath of God is hanging over him, for his many sinful deeds and thoughts, —and that it is not to be averted by unwilling submissions, and extorted supplications,—that his accumu-

lated guilt is not to be expiated by a few tears, or even temporary sufferings. He may have been forced to yield a reluctant assent to the truth of the scripture declarations,—that without a personal interest in Christ there is no salvation, no reconciliation with an offended God, no hope of heaven, no deliverance from hell; in a word, that he must be renewed in heart and spirit, or perish eternally. He may hence feel, most convincingly, the necessity of applying to a Redeemer; of taking the yoke of Christ upon him, learning of him, following him, and obeying him. He may be compelled to own, in his mind, that they who have done so have chosen the good part, whatever temporal sacrifices they have made, or whatever obloquy they have incurred. He may secretly envy their portion, and wish he could pass over the intervening stages, and place himself exactly in their situation. He may have found the scriptures speak a language mortifying to his pride, and, notwithstanding his attempts to explain it away, or to evade its force, he is obliged inwardly to grant, that the plain meaning may be the true one after all. When a person thus perceives God's word forcing its light upon his mind, impressing conviction upon his heart, awakening his conscience, pointing out the only refuge, and impelling him to escape for his life ere it be too late; to a man in this situation it may be said, in an emphatic sense, that the kingdom of God has come nigh to him.

It is for each of you, my dear hearers, to recollect whether, and in what degree, such thoughts, such apprehensions, such convictions as I have stated, have at any time arisen in your mind,—how, and on what oc-

casion they have been excited,—how long they have remained,—whether they have departed for a season, and then recurred with increased force, or perhaps returned with diminished power, as it were with exhausted strength, and feebler efforts, to regain possession of your soul. Let it be clearly understood, that in every instance in which the truths of God's word have been brought home, with perceptible effect, to your heart or conscience, in that hour, and on that occasion, the kingdom of God did come nigh unto you.

But here a lamentable case meets our view. The blessings of the covenant of grace may be brought to a man's knowledge, and placed within his reach,—his heart may feel a strong impression of their value and importance,—and yet he may not lay hold of the covenant so as to appropriate its benefits. The ark of salvation may, like Noah's ark upon the waters, float past his door, and, halting a while at his very threshold, may invite him to take refuge within its bosom; yet he may indolently linger in his chamber, or perversely shut his door, and reject the merciful invitation. The kingdom of God may come nigh to many a one, who yet does not enter it. Multitudes now, as well as formerly, hear but do not understand, and see but do not perceive; for their heart is waxed gross, their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, Acts xxviii. 27. Many may entertain a general conviction of the importance of eternity, and its awful concerns, and yet delay or neglect to provide for their eternal interests. The young ruler in the gospel applied, with much sincerity and earnestness, for direction how to attain eter-

nal life; yet he soon turned, and went away "sad and grieved," for he loved his great possessions too well to exchange them for a heavenly inheritance. Though sorrowful at parting with Jesus, and losing heaven, yet he went away notwithstanding,—nor do we hear that he ever returned. A price was put in his hand to get wisdom, but it was in the hand of a fool, who had not a heart to use it, Prov. xvii. 16. A man may form an indolent wish, and utter a heartless desire, to enter into life, but the gate is too strait to be so entered. Not careless seeking, but earnest striving, has the promise of success. One may likewise have strong convictions of guilt, and apprehensions of God's wrath, and yet fail to flee from it with due speed. Felix, under the scourge of conscious unrighteousness, and intemperance, and the dread of a judgment to come, trembled before the messenger of his offended God; yet his conduct to that very apostle clearly proves how hardened his heart continued, bound fast to sin and to the world, Acts xxiv. 25—27. One may, in like manner, be persuaded of the need of a Saviour, and the necessity of obtaining an interest in Christ's atonement and intercession, and yet may delay, or never attempt to follow Christ. How well does the language of the half-disciples in the gospel still express the mind of many to whom Jesus offers his saving grace, and who are not ignorant of its value! "Lord, I will follow thee," says one, "but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house;"—"Suffer me first," says another, "to go and bury my father," Luke ix. 59. 61. Some temporal

affair must have the preference ; the care of the soul is postponed, perhaps laid aside for ever.

II. Suffer ye now, my friends, the word of *application*,—and may the Spirit of truth direct it savingly to the heart of every one whose case it may suit !

1. How near to hopeless is the case of those to whom the kingdom of God hath come nigh, and who yet delay or refuse to enter into it !—and how very alarming must be *(alas ! is)* your case, if you be now of that number ! I shall suppose that, through some disadvantages in your situation, such as are, alas ! but too frequent, the warnings of God's word, and the tidings of salvation, were but obscurely declared, or faintly urged, or seldom brought to your notice :—while this was the case, though you did not then embrace an unseen and unknown Saviour, yet there was room to hope, that if you were better taught, if you did but hear and attend to the genuine truths of God's word, you might receive them into your heart, and your souls might live. But if you have been hearing warnings, and calls, and encouragements, without regarding warnings, or complying with calls, what can you hear further ?—we have no other revelation to publish, no other message to deliver, no other gospel to preach ; " yea, woe is unto us," if we attempt to preach any other gospel than that which you have already heard.

If you had only heard the word spoken, but never witnessed the more solemn ordinances of the gospel, there would be hope that these might make a stronger impression. Though they are exceedingly simple in themselves, and free from those pompous ceremonies

which impose on the fancy, without affecting the heart, yet their all-wise Author hath fitted them for awakening the affections of the soul, and annexed a divine power to the solemn administration of them, which has been often felt even by spectators. But if you have, again and again, seen, as it were, "Jesus Christ evidently set forth, crucified among you," and yet have beheld such a spectacle with little emotion or concern, what further means can be used to awaken the feelings of repentance, gratitude, or love? We have no more affecting representations to give. We dare not invent ordinances of our own.

Nay, if you had only heard the word, and witnessed the holy sacraments, but never seen the power of divine grace exemplified in the holy lives of neighbours or relatives, there would be hope, that if once you saw such living evidences of the power and grace of Christ, you might be persuaded at last to seek the Lord for yourselves, and not rest satisfied without endeavouring to copy such fair examples. But when you have seen, among your kindred or acquaintances, persons who have bridled their tongue, who have renounced worldly pleasures, and set their affections on things above; who have sustained afflictions with fortitude, borne injuries with patience, requited good for evil; who have despised and rejected wealth, when it came into competition with religious advantages; and who uniformly profess their dependence on the promised grace of God for all they have, or hope to attain; when you have seen and observed, and yet undervalue such attainments, what further evidence can be given you? We cannot unfold to you the world of spirits. To all of you the

kingdom of God has thus come nigh; with respect to some, it has come even to your house; yet you turn away, and flee from it.

It is possible you may still continue to hear and to behold those things with the same unconcern, or, at least, with no effectual resolution, or earnest endeavour to discard your idols, and give yourselves wholly up to Christ;—you may continue to wonder what mean the warm expostulations you hear, and the strange things you see;—you may satisfy yourselves with fallacious hopes, and so put off the evil day, or with a fancied righteousness of your own, and so make light of the righteousness of Christ; and then go away, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize, and think no more of securing a possession in the heavenly inheritance;—you may, in a word, reject the counsel of God, and shut yourselves out from his kingdom. "Notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

We may go farther, and say, Though you had hitherto been unconcerned spectators of the grace of God, held forth to all, and accepted by some, but had never yet been yourselves affected by it, there might still be hope that, when you came to see and feel your own interest in the weighty truths which you heard, you would then with eagerness make your escape from sin and wrath, and flee for refuge to the hope set before you. But is there not much reason to fear that, with respect to several, the case is yet otherwise? You have not only heard and read, but you have felt the word prick your heart, like the Jews on the day of Pentecost; though you have not, like them, exclaimed, "Men and brethren,

what shall we do?" you have been convinced that the words of scripture may be true, notwithstanding the reasoning of your carnal minds against them. You have been forced to admit the necessity of getting within the "strait gate," which the gospel pointed out; yet you have never yet "striven" to enter in. You have had occasional convictions of guilt, and dread of God's wrath, both for breaking his law, and for neglecting his salvation; yet you have never fled from wrath, as you would from a falling house, or a rushing torrent. You have been convinced that, without an interest in Christ, you could not be safe at last; yet you have not cried in earnest supplication, with blind Bartimeus, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" or with the disciples in the storm, "Lord, save us, we perish!" If such convictions have been stifled, rather than cherished; if they have been dismissed with satisfaction, rather than lost with regret; if they have at times returned, and been as often evaded, or chaced away, where can the truth now enter, or in what other way can it lay hold of you?

You may now, perhaps, satisfy yourselves with the unwarranted expectation, that these convictions, if they be still needful, may return just as they came before, without any effort on your part. Or you may rather suppose, that it is quite enough that you once experienced some kind of concern, or fear, or compunction, though no change of heart, or holiness of life, was found to follow. Or you may now despise and resist the unavailing attempt to revive your concern, and withdraw beyond the sound of warning, and flee from the gracious, mighty hand, which would pull you out of the

gulph of perdition. "Notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

2. What a dreadful aggravation of the future punishment of unbelievers will it be, to reflect on the mercies they have slighted, and the calls they have refused!

We know well that death is no eternal sleep. We speak that of which we are assured, when we say, that all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall arise, they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation. When the Lord shall come, with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment on all; when all the ungodly shall be convicted before the unerring Judge, of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed, and of all their hard speeches which they have spoken against him; when they that have sinned without the law, shall perish without the law; when conscience, which is a law to herself, shall demand the vengeance due to her violated rights,—where, then, shall the ungodly and the sinner appear, who hath counted the blood of the covenant an unholy, or an unnecessary, insignificant thing, and done despite to the Spirit of grace?

Though they may give little heed now to warnings, and calls, and offers of mercy; though they may disregard the voice that forewarns them of the wrath of God, revealed against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men,—which tells them, that the Lord Jesus

shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come), then shall they know that the word of prophecy hath been among them. A dreadful sound shall be in their ears, and the voice of the tormentor ever telling them how far they are removed from heaven, how far now out of reach of mercy. He bids them look to Abraham, only to see that he is "afar off," and that there is a great gulph fixed between, which none can ever pass. He bids them behold Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, only to remind them how many of God's poor oppressed children they had formerly despised, who are now comforted, while they are tormented. And then, he adds, "Though ye are now removed far off from all the blessedness which ye there behold; notwithstanding, remember, and be ye sure of this, that the time was, when the kingdom of God did come nigh unto you." Well might our Lord say, that it would indeed be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for these.

But dreadful as is the case of every one who has long made light of the gospel call, yet the case is not wholly desperate. Still there is hope. While we have a voice to speak, while ye have ears to hear, we cannot address you in the language of reprobation. Men and brethren, we testify to you, that this day the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you; even to you, O sinner! whoever you are, who hear these words, though you never bestowed a serious thought on them

before,—nay, though you had often wished the Bible had never been heard of. The door of mercy is not yet finally barred; the compassion of Jesus is not yet exhausted. Jerusalem had killed the prophets, and stoned them that were sent unto her, yet to Jerusalem, in a special manner, did the Lord Jesus reveal his tender mercy, and his mighty power to save. Jerusalem killed the Prince of life, and hanged him on a tree; yet, when his apostles were to preach repentance and remission of sins among all nations, they must begin even at Jerusalem. To you, O sinner! is this word of salvation sent. See that you refuse not him that speaketh from heaven, that crieth aloud, "How long, ye scorners, will ye delight in your scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you," Prov. i. 22. 23. No longer, then, grieve his compassionate heart, by refusing his free grace. Commit your guilty polluted souls into his hands, accept his offered mercy, and give him the glory. We have a message from God to you this day. These are the words of peace with which we are charged; "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts

higher than your thoughts," Isaiah lv. 7—9. Once more, then, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" "Incline your ear, and come to me, saith the Lord, who hath mercy upon you; hear, and your soul shall live."

SERMON V.

LUKE xix. 41. 42.—*And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*

IT has been emphatically said, by an inspired apostle, that "God is love." Not only is he represented as possessing this most exalted and truly divine affection in the highest degree; but the various modifications of love, which seem to partake of human infirmity, are in scripture ascribed to God, so as to bring its operation more within the reach of our comprehension. This amiable affection, in its various human shapes and attitudes, is particularly conspicuous in "the *man* Christ

Jesus," in whom it appears quite in character. The sentiments of tender solicitude, of painful sympathy and commiseration, are strikingly exhibited in his language and deportment. The great God our Saviour, is brought down to the level of humanity; he mourns and pities, he grieves and weeps, with all the fellow-feeling of an affectionate brother. Love, and compassion, and sorrow, on account of obstinate perishing sinners, are strongly expressed in the language of the text before us. To obtain a fuller insight into this tender exclamation, we shall endeavour to take a view,

I. Of the *doctrines* referred to in the text.
II. Of the *spirit* which it breathes.

I. The *doctrines*, to which there is an obvious reference in the words of our text, are of the highest importance,—they are peculiar to the Christian revelation,—they are doctrines which cannot be too often brought to our view, and pressed on our attention. May the divine Spirit, from whom they came, impress them now on our hearts!

1. The knowledge of revealed truth is necessary to true and lasting peace.

Sin early disturbed the harmony which subsisted among the creatures of God. A spirit of pride, or envy, or discontent, threw some of the heavenly inhabitants down from their "first estate," and inspired them with an inveterate enmity against the King of heaven. To them no terms of peace were proposed, no offers of pardon made. A like spirit of dissatisfaction and disobe-

dience destroyed the happiness which man enjoyed in paradise, and changed his blissful state of purity and peace into a state of enmity against God, and exposure to his righteous judgment. Notwithstanding their apostacy, an all-gracious God determined not to cut them off, but to bring them back to a state of reconciliation. "I know the thoughts which I think towards you," was his merciful counsel, "thoughts of peace, and not of evil," Jer. xxix. 11. He has appointed a Peacemaker,—has sent him to mediate between rebellious subjects and their offended Sovereign,—has proposed the most condescending terms of reconciliation,—has provided the very oblation which must atone for the offences of his creatures,—has taught them how to avail themselves of his bounty,—beseeches them to be reconciled, and promises to take them under his protection and paternal care.

These, brethren, are things which belong to the peace of every sinner. Without such a provision, no man could be saved. The knowledge of this merciful appointment of God is necessary to the reception of his offers; for how shall a person embrace an offer, or accept an invitation, or agree to a proposal, which he does not know? "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." This is the simple tenor of the gospel proclamation. "But how," argues an apostle, "shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?"

It is not enough, however, to have heard of these things "by the hearing of the ear." A more intimate knowledge of this wonderful scheme of salvation, is necessary to profit by it. An apprehension of the ex-

tent and purity of the divine law, and of the justice of that sentence by which transgressors are condemned, —a just notion of the exalted character of our Redeemer, of the loving-kindness of God our Saviour, in undertaking, carrying on, and completing the work of redemption,—and of the grace of God our Sanctifier, in carrying forward, to a blessed consummation, the work of salvation in the soul of a sinner,—these are branches of saving knowledge without which a man cannot possess proper affections toward God. To apprehend the true character of God, to feel the evil of sin, to understand the nature of the gospel salvation, and to appreciate its blessings, this is to "know the things which belong to our peace." To be ignorant of these things is to be "without God and without hope." But when a sinner savingly knows them, then "being justified by faith, he has peace with God," &c. Rom. v. 1.

As there can be no reconciliation between sinners and their offended God, except in the way which he has graciously appointed, so there can be no solid or lasting peace of mind, but through the knowledge of this salvation. A person may be buried in thoughtless unconcern about his own state, unconcious of his guilt, and insensible of his danger,—and this insensibility may be miscalled peace; but it is not what an apostle significantly calls "the peace of God;" it is a delusive quiet, that deceives for a time, but must, sooner or later, be broken. The confession, "We are verily guilty," will at last be extorted, when conscience will no longer be silent, and divine justice will speak out with a voice of terror. Or a person may think to compensate for

his sins by acts of charity, or of piety, or of self-denial and mortification; and thus may bribe his conscience to allow him to rest undisturbed. But the quiet which is thus purchased is short and precarious. The violated law will at last make its just claims to be known,—and the earnest inquiry, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" wherewith shall I appease his just indignation? will remain unanswered. Nothing can effectually restore peace to the soul groaning under a load of guilt, and trembling at the view of its merited punishment, except the certain knowledge, the firm persuasion, that Christ is set forth to be the propitiation for our sins,—that there is no condemnation to them that are in Jesus, because his blood cleanseth from all sin. When this persuasion sheds its blessed influence on the soul, then distressing fears vanish away, composure and tranquillity return, hope and joy spring up, and the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeps the heart and mind through Christ Jesus," Phil. iv. 7. Well may we say concerning those whom we pity and love, "O that they knew the things which belong to their peace!"

2. There is a period fixed in the divine counsels, within which, but not beyond it, this saving knowledge may be attained.

It is not affirmed that the knowledge of divine truth is placed within the reach of all. He who gave his Son a ransom for many,—who gives grace and glory as a free gift for his Son's sake,—who doth what he will with his own, and bestows, or withholds, according to his sovereign pleasure,—sends messengers of peace, and makes known his purposes of mercy to some, but

not to all. In this he acts according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, without assigning the reasons of his conduct to us. Moreover, he informs us, that the offers of pardon, though made in the most gratuitous manner, will not be continued always,—that the door of mercy will not remain always open,—that the period of indemnity is circumscribed within certain limits, fixed and known to God, though concealed from us; and when that is expired, there will be no renewal of the favour. This period of grace may, in the case of some, be extended to the very last moment of their life; with respect to others, not so far. "When once the master of the house hath risen up, and hath shut to the door," his words to all who are then found standing without, and who would not enter in proper time, shall be, "I know you not, whence ye are; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity," Luke xiii. 25. There is no repentance in the grave; no pardon offered to the dead. The disembodied spirit, immediately on its quitting its fleshly tabernacle, will either be carried with Lazarus to Abraham's bosom, or, with the rich man, will lift up its eyes in the torments of hell. But even before the soul is separated from the body, and summoned to receive its doom, the irreversible sentence may be pronounced, "My Spirit shall no longer strive with this man." The materials of saving knowledge may be withdrawn out of reach, or concealed from view, so that there shall be "a famine of the words of the Lord," and the things which belong to a sinner's peace may be "hid from his eyes," Amos viii. 11. The eye may become dim, that it cannot see, and the ear become heavy, that it cannot hear; so that the channels through

which the word of salvation can be conveyed, shall be stopped, and 'knowledge at these inlets quite shut out.' The heart may wax gross, so that there shall be no disposition to attend to divine truth, nor even capacity to apprehend it. The grace which alone can open the understanding, and impress the heart, may be withheld; and the soul may be left to harden in its own deceitfulness, and to corrupt in its own filthiness. While the period of the Lord's forbearance continues, the sinner may obtain mercy. This is "his day," the day of his merciful visitation. The Saviour invites,—the Spirit's influences are ready to be imparted,—the arms of divine mercy are extended,—the angels of God are tuning their harps to celebrate with joy the return of a penitent sinner. But when the day of the Lord's anger arrives, and the sentence is gone forth, "Ephraim is joined to idols, *let him alone*," "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries," Heb. x. 27.

What an awful state is this! Well may we be in dread for the fate of careless sinners, and cry, O! that they would improve their precious, but transient season of grace, in this their day, lest the light be withdrawn, and repentance, and pardon, and peace, be for ever hid from their eyes.

Having briefly stated these two important points of doctrine, which the text presents to our view, we come now to consider,

II. The spirit which it breathes.

1. We find our Lord lamenting the inexcuseable in-

attention, and incorrigible supineness of sinners, who will not attend to their great concern. He had travelled far, and laboured much, to persuade the Jews to embrace the salvation which he came to offer them. He had strongly warned them, and earnestly besought them not to refuse. Yet some carelessly neglected or despised, while others perversely rejected his counsel. He might well have spoken to them only in terms of indignant triumph, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" "Because I have called, and ye refused; I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; therefore I will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh. Go and cry unto the gods whom ye have chosen, let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation; for ye have forsaken me, and served other gods, wherefore I will deliver you no more." Such *might* have been his language. But, instead of glorying over their miseries which they had brought upon themselves, we find him weeping over their unhappy case, and lamenting their stubbornness, in turning away from their only refuge. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not." "I came a light into the world, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and especially the glory of my people Israel;" but "ye chose darkness rather than light." "I sent unto you my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them;" "but them ye killed, beating some, and stoning others." I came myself, and stood, and cried, "If *any man* thirst, let him come to me and

drink;" "but ye *would* not come unto me that ye might have life." I have stood at your door and knocked, crying, "If *any man* hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me;" but ye *would* not hear, nor open. Your only answer, if ye answered at all, was, "Trouble me not, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed," I cannot rise and give thee entrance. I have again and again respited the sentence, and withheld the stroke which would have cut you down, "as cumbering the ground. I have digged about my fig-tree to see if it would yet bear fruit," and applied various means to reclaim and improve; and what has been the fruit of my labour? nothing but continued barrenness and unprofitableness. "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Yet when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes. O! that ye were wise, that ye knew the things which belong to your peace; but now they are hid from your eyes." Alas! my friends, is not this still the language in which our compassionate Redeemer has to address many of ourselves? Has he not, by his messengers, called, and invited, and urged you to come to him for salvation? And have not you as often turned away, wondering what all this importunity meant; or supposing it could not be addressed to you; or civilly acknowledged the good intention of the warnings and admonitions you heard, and then thought no more of them, than if you had heard them not? How often have you thus rejected the counsel of God respecting your salvation, as if you did not choose to have any part or lot in such a matter, and trifled away your seasons of

grace, youth, and health, and ordinances, and opportunities, which will never return? And now your accepted time, your day of salvation, is drawing to a close; the shadows of the evening are stretched out, and yet you have not sealed your covenant with your Lord and Redeemer, while he stands, and with a pitying look, takes his last farewell, and with flowing tears exclaims, "O that ye had considered and known, in this your day, the things which belong to your peace, but now they are about to be for ever hid from your eyes; your day is just expiring, the shades of night are closing around you, and nothing remains for you but the blackness of darkness for ever."

2. We see our Lord deploring the inevitable misery which sinners are bringing on their own souls, when they might have avoided it. Jesus perceived the situation to which the whole Jewish people, with the exception of a few individuals, had now reduced themselves. They were within four days of filling up the measure of their guilt, by effecting their murderous purposes against himself. They were then given up to judicial blindness and obduracy, and were to suffer such calamities from the hands of the Romans, as never had been endured by any people since the beginning of the world. All this, too, was but an earnest of infinitely heavier judgments, which were to abide upon them for ever and ever. What else is the doom of every careless sinner? How can he escape, who neglects the great salvation of the gospel? The unchangeable rectitude of the divine nature requires, that the word of God shall stand sure, that sinners shall not enter into the congregation of the righteous, but that the way of

the ungodly shall perish. His mercy has provided and proposed an effectual way of deliverance. His forbearance has endured, with much long-suffering, the transgressors of his law. But this forbearance has its limits. Justice, at length, must take its course. And who can stand when the righteous Judge of all the earth shall enter into judgment? Who can say that his heart shall endure, or his hands be strong, in the day when the Lord shall deal with him according to his iniquities? Jesus wept over lost Jerusalem, not only as one possessed of human feelings, but as their Mediator, who had come to seek and to save them. He stands in the same relation to us. And while he deplores the miserable state of those who are about to be consigned over to their righteous doom, he knows, (and it aggravates his sympathetic pain), that he will himself pronounce the sentence which seals them to the day of perdition. The language of his compassionate heart now toward such, is, "How often have I called, how long have I waited; and when your obstinacy would have provoked my anger, how often has my heart turned within me, and my repentings been kindled together? *You* have I known of all the families of the earth; *you* would I have gathered under my protecting wings; and how shall I hereafter bid you depart from me for ever? Yet thus it must be. Ye would not hearken to my voice; Israel would none of me. So I gave you up to your own heart's lust, and left you to walk in your own counsel. And now your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind. O that my people had hearkened unto me, that Israel had chosen my ways; I should soon have

subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. But now their house is left desolate; distress and anguish are come upon them; yea, sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." Does our compassionate Redeemer thus tenderly deplore the wretched fate of thoughtless deluded sinners; and shall any of you still remain unmoved at the thought of his having poured forth his blood for your sins, and shed tears for your folly, and all in vain?

3. Jesus tenderly feels for individual sinners, according to the particular aggravations of their respective cases. He whose eye is in every place, beholding the evil as well as the good, who marks every circumstance that concerns every one of his people, is not inattentive to the particular case of each sinner on whom he has bestowed his favours in vain. He looks down with compassion on some whose day of grace he sees nearly closed, and, remembering how they have abused the advantages they have enjoyed, he says, "O that ye might know, at least in this your day, the things which belong to your peace, for very soon they shall be hid from your eyes." Looking on a number of the lost sheep of his fold, he distinguishes, perhaps, some one or other with peculiar tenderness, and addresses him as it were in the anguish of his spirit, "Did I not find thee in a desert land, in the waste howling wilderness; did I not lead thee about, and instruct thee, and keep thee as the apple of mine eye? Did I not bear thee, and carry thee all the days of old? But thou didst rebel, and vex my holy Spirit. Did I not plant thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed? How,

then, art thou become the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? O that thou wouldst know, even *thou*, though others should forsake me, or deny me, or lift up the heel against me; yet *thou*, alas! how is the gold become dim, the fine gold changed! surely the kingdom of God had come nigh thee. Thou wast not far from the kingdom of heaven. The ark which would have saved thy soul alive, floated past thy very threshold. I would have pulled thee in, but thou wouldst not. Was it not even so? "*Son, remember.*" O that thou mightest yet know, even thou, at least in the evening of this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace, that thou wouldst turn, wholly turn unto me, that I might yet save thee."

Let us suppose, for a moment, that our gracious Lord were to come into this assembly, and to look round upon us all, what would be the feelings of his benevolent heart? When he beheld so many yet ignorant of salvation, and perishing in the midst of mercy, methinks he would burst into a flood of tears. To see persons who, by disease or accident, will soon be hurried into the eternal world, while yet unprepared to meet their God,—to see them continue gay and thoughtless, or only concerned about the present life, while the rider on a pale horse, death, and hell following after him, is coming on apace to seize his expected prey,—would not this pierce him with sorrow, and extort from him a lamentation similar to that before us? Yea, at this moment, we may be sure that he is actually inspecting our hearts, that he is grieved for our folly, our deadness, and unconcern. Hear him once more crying,—and perhaps, with regard to some, it may be

but once more,—" Turn ye, turn ye, from your foolish, your carnal, worldly, evil, ruinous ways,—turn to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope, while yet there is a spark of hope left unextinguished; to-day do I declare that I will render double unto you, of all that you have cast away. Grieve not my spirit, lose not your own souls, but now, in this your day, attend earnestly to the things which belong to your peace, before the irreversible sentence go forth, and there be no escape."

We have thus briefly considered what are the feelings of our compassionate Redeemer over perishing sinners, and what may be supposed to be his language in viewing their miserable state. Let us now turn our attention to ourselves, and see what is, or ought to be, our opinion of our own hearts and conduct, if we have, in any measure, or in repeated instances, thus grieved his tender Spirit. Perhaps many in that day might wonder at our Lord's tears, and might be disposed to deride, rather than to sympathize, with this exercise of his compassion. They might not see any thing so very pitiable in the state of Jerusalem, nor be conscious of it in their own case. So it may be with many at this day. If they see a servant of Christ expressing his concern for perishing souls with tears which he cannot repress, they will laugh at him as a weak enthusiast. Yet surely there is a cause. There must be real ground for bitter sorrow, when the Lord, who knows all things, is so strongly affected. And what if you, my friend, be yourself a principal cause of these painful emotions? What is our opinion of a child, of whom we say that he has cost his affectionate parent many a sore pang, and wrung from him many a bitter tear? What should we think of such a

child, did he still continue unconcerned at the pain he has occasioned, and no way anxious to relieve it? Say, then, what is your judgment of your own behaviour, when you are told, "Thou art the man?" O that conscience would do her duty, and speak out! Then would your tears flow in their turn. You would confess, 'I have indeed gone on frowardly in the way of my own heart,—I have hardened myself against conviction,—I have studiously explained away the express declarations of God's word,—I have resisted impressions, and given my serious thoughts to the wind. My purposes formed in a time of distress, and my pious resolutions on a bed of sickness, I have suffered to evaporate, like a morning cloud, before the sun-shine of health and prosperity, or the gale of worldly occupations. I have often said to my heavenly Monitor, "Go thy way for this time, at a more convenient season I will call for thee." Often have I kept my bountiful Benefactor standing at the door, when he requested admittance only to bestow the gift he carried in his hand. When he expostulated with me, in the most condescending manner, "Return, thou backsliding Israel, and I will not cause mine anger to fall on you," I have coldly answered, I pray thee, have me excused; nay, I have taken encouragement, from his very forbearance, to treat him unkindly, to put him off with insignificant excuses, and to undervalue the mercy I so much needed. Because his grace abounded, I went on to sin. Because sentence against my evil works was not executed speedily, therefore I became the more insensible to his forbearance, the more unthankful for his goodness. When he kept silence, I came to think that he was altogether

such a one as myself, and did not disapprove my ways, till my heart seemed fully set in me to do evil, and I could hear his tenderest expostulations with determined indifference. Surely any other than himself would have been wearied out with my obstinacy, and ungrateful requital of such unmerited favours. Were he not God, and not man, he would have left me ere now, provoked and disgusted with my perverse folly. Such would be the language of an ingenuous contrite soul, such the sentiments of our hearts if we knew ourselves, and were moved as we ought with that affecting sight,—*a Saviour in tears!*

But it is not enough that we lament our past carelessness and stubbornness, which has so much grieved the heart of our compassionate Redeemer. Let us not stop here. Is there no way remaining, in which we may give joy to this friend of sinners? Surely there is. If he wept over the ungodly sinner, we may be sure that he will rejoice over those who turn from their folly, and prefer heavenly wisdom. Does the shepherd rejoice at finding the one sheep which had strayed in the wilderness? Does the fond parent rejoice over his son, who was lost and is found, who was dead and is alive again? Is there joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth? And shall not the heart of our Lord, which is full of love, feel, even in the plenitude of bliss, an accession of joy, when he sees a sinner turning from the paths of death, and choosing the way of life? He hath himself assured us what are his emotions on such an occasion: "He will rejoice over them, to do them good; he will rejoice over them with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over them with sing-

ing." Why, then, do we loiter in the wilderness, when he invites us to a land flowing with milk and honey, and assures us that nothing will give him more joy than to conduct us thither, and give us possession? Do not, then, keep him longer complaining of your hardness of heart, and saying, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Improve the time, for the time is short,—it cannot but be short. Do not, then, stand hesitating and dallying with your salvation, after so much time already lost, when your day of grace is far spent, perhaps near, yea, very near its close. If the Sun of righteousness and of mercy, which has long shone upon you in vain, shall go down in wrath, it riseth no more. Nothing will then remain but self-reproach, bitter lamentation, unavailing cries, and the groanings of everlasting despair. But now is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation. Now, then, with full purpose of heart, with earnest supplications, and with firm trust in your Redeemer, flee for refuge to the hope which is set before you, and lay fast hold on eternal life. So shall you have safety, peace, and comfort here, and rejoice in the presence of God, and of your adorable Lord and Saviour, in the world to come.

SERMON VI *.

PSAL. CXVI. 15.—*Precious, in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints.*

THAT the saints of God should be subject to pain or death, may appear to us surprising. We might be ready to suppose that those on whom God had placed his love, and whom he had marked out as fellow-heirs with his beloved Son, of an everlasting inheritance, should, from the moment of their calling, be purified from all sin, and exempted from all suffering. But we find that he who doth all things well, hath ordered otherwise. Though guilt be removed from the sanctified soul, and the dominion of sin overthrown, yet many of the bitter fruits of sin are still permitted to remain; and they who are made fellow-heirs with

* Preached in the church of Urquhart, on occasion of the much lamented death of the Rev. Charles Calder, who had for many years been minister of that parish.

Christ, must, like him, be made perfect through sufferings. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," Psal. xxxiv. 19. Though the Lord put away the sin of David, that he should not die, yet the child that was born to him must die, 2 Sam. xii. 13. 14. But while we see the fruits of sin in the sufferings of the righteous, we see also the operation of divine wisdom, of redeeming love, in making even those bitter fruits prove salutary medicines to the soul. The comparatively light afflictions of this life, are made to work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. As the souls of the redeemed are precious in the sight of the Lord, so is every thing which advances their growth in grace, and hastens their glorification. Thus the discipline by which they are exercised,—the sharp convictions which bring them to the foot of the Saviour's cross,—the trials by which they are quickened in prayer, and their graces matured,—the very stroke of death, which brings down the tabernacle in which "they groan" for a time, "being burdened,"—all these are things precious in God's sight.

In following out the train of thought which this subject suggests, I shall willingly indulge you, my brethren, and myself, in keeping in view that most interesting event to which our attention is this day drawn. The death of a saint,—of a minister,—of such a minister, must ever be an event highly affecting to all who "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen;" and most of all affecting to those who were nearly connected with him, as his natural or his spiritual children, fed from his hand, and reared under his care.

I. A saint, through all the periods of his existence, is precious in the sight of the Lord.

At his *birth*, he is marked out as a "vessel made unto honour,"—as one destined to become a partaker of grace, and an heir of glory. His name is written in the Lamb's book of life, and ministering angels are intrusted with the care of his person. Thus it was with your late beloved and revered pastor. Like Paul, he was separated by the Lord, from his birth, as a chosen vessel to bear the name of Jesus to the ears of many sinners. His extraction from pious parents, persons in covenant with God, especially from a father and grandfather, eminent ministers of the gospel, whose praise is still in our church, and whose distinguished graces and gifts will be recorded for many generations,—all shows how precious was his birth in the sight of his Lord.

During the whole *course of his life*, every incident that befals a saint of God is so ordered, that they all work together for good to his soul. Every turn that affects his health, his growth, his education, and manner of life, especially the means and circumstances by which Jesus makes himself known to his soul,—the tokens of love by which Jesus gains his heart, and wins his affections,—the very scene of these heavenly communications,—the fig-tree under whose hallowed shade the Saviour saw and blessed Nathaniel,—all these circumstances are specially ordered and arranged, and, from the very important effects that follow, they are all most precious in the sight of the Lord. In the case of your much-lamented minister, many of the Lord's dealings with his soul must remain unknown. Some he could impart to his confidential friends, but others

his singular delicacy made him conceal, lest he should seem to exalt himself, leaving them to be made known, to the praise of sovereign grace, in that day when all secrets shall be revealed, and there will be no danger of mistaken imputations. But the extensive knowledge he possessed of Christian experience, his holy intimacy with God, his large acquaintance with the spiritual import of scripture, and his skilful application of it to the case of exercised Christians,—these abundantly testify the course of deep and constant discipline by which his own soul was trained in the school of Christ.

The *death* of a saint is, in a peculiar manner, the object of the Saviour's attention and care. As that is the time when nature is most ready to fail, so then does grace most reign and triumph. Some tender spirits, who, "*through fear* of death, were all their life subject to bondage," have had their shackles knocked off, and their fears entirely removed, at the approach of death. Martyrs have, at death, borne a loud and unquestionable testimony to the invincible power and grace of their Redeemer. Some who have ended an obscure life, by what the world would account an inglorious death, yet have showed themselves strong in faith, and, borne up by angels, who thought it an honour to be so employed, have taken their flight from a sordid hovel to Abraham's bosom. John the Baptist ended his ministry and his life in prison, without one testimony on record of his faith or fortitude in that trying hour. But we may not therefore think that holy man's death was the less precious in his Master's sight, or the less celebrated in heaven. How precious in the sight of the Lord must be the stroke which releases his

beloved child from his prison-house!—which brings him into closer union, and more intimate enjoyment of himself! How precious the very pains and sufferings which serve to refine his soul, to purge away his dross, to mature his faith, and complete his preparation for bliss! Brethren, we speak that which we do know, which our eyes and ears have witnessed, when we testify how bright the graces of your beloved pastor shone in the hour of his fiery trial. "The trial of his faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, was indeed found unto praise, and honour, and glory," 1 Pet. i. 7. The continuance and increase of acute pain put his faith, and patience, and submission, to a severe proof; but they remarkably stood the trial. Not a murmur or complaining word escaped his lips,—not a feature of his face betrayed a struggle to suppress complaint. He described his sufferings, indeed, by the most significant comparisons; but during the whole of his illness, his language was that of praise and adoration of his blessed Redeemer,—of gratitude and blessings to his dear partner, relatives, and friends,—to his affectionate attendants,—to his beloved flock, for whom he was willing still "to spend, and to be spent." Even in the extremity of pain, he was enabled to say, that he could willingly spend a life-time in that state, for the sake of winning one soul to Christ. In these last trying days, he was seen only by "chosen witnesses." But these will long remember, and esteem it as one of their greatest privileges, that they witnessed the testimony which this dying saint bore to the goodness and love of his glorified Redeemer.

II. I observe, in the *second* place, that the person of the saints is precious in the sight of the Lord.

The *soul* of a believer is inestimably dear and precious to his Redeemer. He hath redeemed it from death with an inestimable ransom, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with his own precious blood. And having bought it with such a price, he hath purified and garnished it, to be a habitation for himself to dwell in. He saves the soul of his darling from the lions, from the assaults of the adversary; so that, when Satan hath desired to have him, that he might sift him as wheat, the intercession of Christ has proved a wall of defence which the enemy durst not assail, and could not overleap.

The believer's *body* also is precious in the Lord's sight. This is the temporary receptacle of the sanctified soul, and all its organs are consecrated to a holy service. How precious, may we say, as well as beautiful, are the feet of him who bringeth good tidings of good! How precious the tongue that proclaims those good tidings, that publisheth salvation! How precious the hand that is stretched out in earnest affectionate expostulation and intreaty! All is dear to the Redeemer, who hath consecrated the whole body as a vessel fitted for his special use.

The very dead *dust* of the saints is precious in the sight of the Lord. If his servants take pleasure in the stones of Zion, and favour the dust thereof, (Psal. cii. 14.), how much more will Zion's King favour the dust of the children of Zion! In the grave, it will rest in hope. The whole person of the believer, soul and body, through time and eternity, is included in the

covenant which Jesus hath ratified and sealed with his blood; and every article comprehended within the provisions of that covenant, must be of inestimable value.

Well do ye know, brethren, how fully these things were realized in him who ministered in this sanctuary. How precious in the Lord's sight must his soul have been, when, along with the grace bestowed on him in common with every believer, though in an uncommon measure, he was furnished with so many heavenly endowments besides,—endowments which shone with a pure and serene lustre,—the more admired, the more closely they were inspected. I need only mention, to you who knew him, the ardent affection with which he loved his friends and his people,—his tender sensibility and compassion for them in their distresses, so that, like his blessed Master, in all their afflictions he was afflicted,—the indefatigable labour and zeal with which he persevered, through much infirmity, in declaring the whole counsel of God, and winning souls to Christ, —while, in his addresses from this place, his tender yet fervent spirit almost seemed ready to quit its own tabernacle, and penetrate into the souls and consciences of the hearers. With what affectionate earnestness did he warn the careless, reprove the obstinate, comfort the mourners, encourage the desponding, "speaking, and exhorting, and rebuking with all authority;" so that it might be truly said of him, in the language of a Christian poet,

> "By him the violated law spoke out
> Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet
> As angels use, the gospel whisper'd peace."

Seldom, if ever, was the difference between the *reading* and the *preaching* of the word more clearly exemplified, than in the discourses of your late beloved pastor. All his instructions and exhortations were derived immediately from scripture, and were conveyed, for the most part, in scripture language. It was the word itself that he preached; but in his hands the most apposite passages were so selected, combined, pointed directly to the heart, and impressed with such pathetic energy on the conscience, as to produce an effect almost irresistible,—even as the natural heat of the sun is increased when its rays are artificially collected, and concentrated in one burning point. But in vain do I attempt to delineate a soul like his, so arrayed in the beauties of holiness. My intention, in commemorating his endowments, is not to give man the praise which is due to God alone, but to shew how precious in the Lord's sight was the soul which he adorned with such endowments, and which he thus delighted to honour.

Let us not overlook the care which God exercised over his body. Besides common provision and preservation, which even the unrighteous and unthankful experience, the Lord sustained, for a course of years, his frame enfeebled by constant labour, and really wasted by "that which came upon him daily,—his anxious care for the church of Christ." Thus was he enabled, through much pain and weakness, to preach the word statedly to his people, with scarcely a day's intermission. It would astonish and shame many a hardy preacher to be told how ill he has often been on a Saturday night, or a Sabbath morning, and yet persisted in undertaking his public work,—and then has been

carried through a service of some hours, to the comfort and delight of a numerous auditory. In this manner he was supported in his beloved Master's service, till within a few days of his departure; so that he might well be said to have fallen at his post, and in the very execution of his duty. But the outward man, though in a state of decay, was, as well as the inner man, under the special care of the Lord, and precious in his sight.

Can we doubt whether the dust of this glorified saint be precious in the sight of his Lord? That dead body which you lately laid in the grave, is safe in the keeping of him who, by his own body, consecrated the grave, and sanctified its rest to his people; who said, "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day." With delight you used to look on his form, when he possessed that corruptible body, which now is crumbling into dust: With how much greater delight will you behold him, when you will see his body fashioned like to Christ's glorious body!—and what has been for a time mingled with earth, shall become the companion of angels, and shall shine as the stars for ever and ever!

III. The work of the saints is precious in the sight of the Lord.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them," Rev. xiv. 13. Every one who is called into the Lord's vineyard, has some work assigned him to do. But the work of a minister of the gospel is peculiarly important;

and if it be performed according to the will of Christ, in faith, and love, and zeal, it is peculiarly precious. It is, in fact, the work of God himself. " It is not ye that speak," said Jesus, " but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." " I laboured," said Paul, " yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." He will not disregard nor forsake the work of his hands. He will effectually take care, that the word which proceeds from himself shall accomplish that which he pleaseth, and shall prosper in the thing whereto he hath sent it," Isa. lv. 11.

How precious in the Lord's sight must have been the work of your late faithful minister, and his labour of love among his people! In his public instructions, and private admonitions, he kept back nothing that was profitable for you, but taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying to high and low, to old and young, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts xx. 20. 21. In his visits to the sick, how sweetly, how powerfully, did he pour the oil of consolation into the wounded spirit; insomuch that many thought themselves happy in being laid on a sick-bed, when they had " the kingdom of God thus brought nigh unto them." In his catechetical labours, in his stated meetings with his flock, in his private conversation with those who were awakened, burdened, tempted, cast down, or in bondage; how skilful, how affectionate, how cheering to their spirits, were the scriptural counsels which he administered! In his case we may, in the fullest sense, apply the apostle's tender appeal to the Thessalonians; ' for yourselves, brethren, know, that he was gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth

her children; so, being affectionately desirous of you, he was willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also his own soul, because ye were dear unto him,' 1 Thess. ii. 1. 7. 8. And though I should not mention it, you cannot forget, brethren, with what a liberal, yet delicate hand, he ministered to the bodily wants of a wide circle of the poor and needy; still conveying spiritual food to their souls, while he fed their bodies. In a word, his whole substance was devoted to the use of others, for Christ's sake. All this was so much in the Spirit of the blessed Jesus himself, (and it is in this view I mention it), that we may warrantably say, "God is not unrighteous, to forget his work and labour of love." No, brethren, his labour has ceased, but his work remains, and will remain. In every soul wherein God has begun a good work by his means, it will be carried on, and finally accomplished in the day of Jesus Christ. The seed which he sowed has not yet all sprung up; the prayers which he offered are not yet all answered. When, on his death-bed, he desired that his love and blessings might be carried to his dear, dear people, he prayed that God would send them the bread of life. This prayer, we trust, will yet be answered. You, and your children, and your children's children, will yet gather much fruit where he hath sown. His record is on high; the prayers which he offered in secret, the tears which he dropped on his Bible, are all registered in heaven. Many a long train of blessings are now preparing, and destined in the counsel of God to descend on his people and his family, in answer to the supplications which ascended warm from his fervent heart before the throne of God.

IV. The flock of a godly pastor is precious in the sight of the Lord.

You may yourselves judge, brethren, how precious your souls were in the estimation of your Lord, when he gave you such a minister. To the people of Israel he gave one king in his anger; but because he loved Israel for ever, therefore he gave them another king to do judgment and justice, 1 Kings x. 9. So, because ye were dear to the Lord, he gave you a pastor according to his own heart, to feed you with knowledge and understanding, Jer. iii. 15. And are you less precious in his sight now, than before he bestowed on you such an inestimable favour? If, when ye were yet enemies, God sent his servant to call you, and brought you nigh, and reconciled you to himself; much more, being reconciled, shall you now be brought forward, and cherished, and kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation. You cannot reasonably expect to get just such a minister as you have lost; and it would be very difficult to say, how the loss of one so eminently useful and beloved, should prove at all serviceable to your interests. But let us not "limit the Holy One of Israel." Sampson did more at his death, for the deliverance of his people, and the discomfiture of their enemies, than all he had done in his life-time. We cannot unfold the purposes of God, nor tell what he will do for this parish. One thing we assuredly know, that it shall be well with the righteous. Those whom he hath chosen and loved as his own, he will love to the end, for "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

The affecting subject of our meditations, suggests the following admonitions.

1. Think on the advantages you enjoyed, and be humbled for the loss of them.

When you reflect on the unwearied constancy with which your late esteemed pastor was enabled, to the last, to continue his ministerial work, you may say that he was taken away almost in the midst of his days and his usefulness. Age had not impaired his powers, nor cooled his ardour, nor blunted his feelings, nor relaxed his labours. Whatever he suffered in his person, you suffered nothing from any remission of his services. In the course of nature, as we say, he might have seen many more days, might yet have fed long the church of God, might yet have turned many to righteousness. By his removal, one full channel of spiritual nourishment is shut up; the suckling is bereaved of the breast which he sucked, the aged is deprived of the staff on which he leaned, the blind wanderer is separated from his guide. Such a bereavement is a sharp chastisement from the hand of God. It has a fearful resemblance to the execution of the threatenings denounced against unfruitful professors, and disobedient sinners: "Take the talent from him."—"I will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."—"The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Alas! how much is it to be feared, that many, even in this favoured spot, have neglected, if not despised, the most impressive warnings, the most earnest invitations, the most affectionate expostulations! It is grieving to think, that amidst the numbers who did receive the

truth in the love of it, many should be found who heard the same blessed truth, and yet put it by as an idle tale, and held fast their idols and their sins. Many a woe did you hear pronounced against those who should harden their hearts under the beams of the Sun of righteousness. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin; woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" O sinners, be humbled before God for your rejection of such a pure light, your misimprovement of such distinguished favours, lest the "silver trumpet" of mercy should sound no more in your ears, but, like the tables of the law in Moses's hand, should be broken in pieces in the day of God's righteous anger! They who have ungratefully and basely requited more than common kindness, will be overtaken at last by a storm of more than common wrath. O that ye were wise, that ye understood this, and would humble yourselves in this day of your merciful visitation, while yet the long-suffering of God waits for you, and his hand is yet stretched out to receive you!

And you, brethren, who rejoiced for a season in that light which is now set upon you, and delighted yourselves in the ministrations with which, for a time, ye were favoured, have not you also reason to be humbled, that you did not value more highly, and improve more carefully, the distinguished privileges which you enjoyed? I do indeed admire and bless God, for the sweet fruits of righteousness which are seen in this well-watered garden. But, the more you search and try yourselves, I am persuaded that you will find the more reason to regret that you did not yet more highly prize your privileges,—that you were not more grateful to God on account of them,—that you were not more

careful to seek and to apply the counsels of your beloved teacher, and more diligent in practising the duties you were taught. While you now remember the bright day of gospel sun-shine which you enjoyed, and consider how little of your work is yet done, how little way you have yet advanced, are you not ready to say, with a heavy heart, "Woe unto us, for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out," Jer. vi. 4.—"O that I were as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shined upon my head!" Job xxix. 3.—"Humble yourselves, brethren, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time," 1 Pet. v. 6.

2. Think on the advantages you enjoyed, and study yet to improve them.

I know it has been the practice of many, in your occasional meetings, or in your family conversations, to recapitulate the instructions which you heard from the pulpit, and to make them the matter of your meditations and prayers. This exercise you may profitably continue still; for I am convinced, that the impression made by your teacher's words was not so faint, nor your memories so little retentive, but that you can easily recall much of what you have heard and learned. And when you do call to mind the words of your revered instructor, surely it will not lessen, but strengthen their effect, to think that you have heard them from *his* mouth for the last time. At that stream you will drink no more. But though the voice of man must cease, the word of God abideth for ever. Let the words of Christ, then, which you have heard so frequently and so impressively applied, still be cherished in your me-

mory, and "dwell in your hearts richly, in all wisdom." Seek, by prayer and social converse, teaching and admonishing one another, to have past impressions revived, and the purposes you formed under your minister's preaching and prayers, renewed and reinforced. Recall to your view his spotless example, how he shewed himself "in all things a pattern of good works," and strive to imitate his purity, his self-denial, his spiritual converse, his devotedness to God, his brotherly-kindness and charity. "Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in him, do; and the God of peace shall be with you." Do you mourn the misimprovement of past seasons? Though the seasons cannot return, yet they may be retraced in memory, —the remembrance of past feelings may be renewed; while you muse, the fire may burn afresh, and your ardent cries, and fervent vows, may still ascend with acceptance before the throne of God. He, whose departure you mourn, being dead, yet speaketh in your faithful memories; and though we cannot say that he now pleads for you, yet his past prayers are recorded in God's "book of remembrance;" and he who is your great, unwearied Advocate, ever liveth, and maketh intercession for you.

Let your children be put in mind of what they have seen and heard; and let your own example lead them to dwell, in thought and speech, on the savoury words of their departed father and instructor. Even the youngest of the present generation may often look up to their parents, and ask, like the Jewish children in the wilderness, "What mean ye" by this lamentation? And you can answer, Sinners ready to perish were we,

and the Lord sent us a spiritual guide, to lead us and our little ones to Christ; and much did he bear you on his heart, and often did he pray that Christ would carry you as lambs in his bosom. Now he is gone home to his Saviour and Lord, and we are left in the wilderness. But Christ remains with us: and you must learn to know him, children, and to love him, and follow him; for he loved you, and gave himself for you.

3. Think on the advantages you enjoyed, and seek that they may be continued.

It were injurious to you, if not absurd, to suppose that many of you have been sitting twenty or thirty years under a pure gospel ministry, and yet that you should be insensible of the value of such a high privilege. It were to deny the unchangeable truth of God's promise, to suppose that a long course of faithful evangelical ministrations should have produced no corresponding fruits. How, then, can we suppose, that you should be unconcerned about the inestimable benefits which you have long enjoyed, or indifferent as to their continuance? After you have been so long, and so carefully instructed in the truth as it is in Jesus, can we suppose that you are yet unable to tell what it is, or to distinguish between truth and error? Or can we imagine, that you will be equally pleased with the one as with the other, that your compliant taste will make no distinction between bread and stone, between a fish and a serpent? No, brethren, we cannot believe that ye have "so learned Christ." You must feel deeply concerned, that yourselves, and your children after you, should continue to be blessed with

the like advantages as you have hitherto enjoyed, that you should still be fed with the bread of life, which alone can nourish your immortal souls. Pray, then, brethren, "pray without ceasing," that the Lord of the harvest would send you a faithful labourer into this part of his vineyard; a "pastor according to his heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding;" one who will walk before you in the way to Zion; who will himself live a life of faith on the Son of God, and from the good treasure of a heart devoted to God, and maintaining daily intercourse with the Father of spirits, may know how to bring forth good things.

Finally, brethren, let me, with earnest desire, and encouraging expectation, address to you the apostle's exhortation: "Remember him which had the rule over you, who spoke unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of his conversation; Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," Heb. xiii. 7.

FINIS.

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